

ESSAYS,
OR
DISCOURSES,
SELECTED FROM
THE WORKS OF FEYJOO,
AND
TRANSLATED FROM THE SPANISH,
BY
JOHN BRETT, ESQ.

VOLUME THE THIRD.

LONDON,

Printed for the TRANSLATOR:

Sold by H. PAYNE, Pall-Mall; C. DILLY, in the
Poultry; and T. EVANS, in the Strand.

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ESSAYS

OF

DISCOVERIES

SELECTED FROM

THE WORKS OF HENRY JON

A N D

TRANSLATED FROM THE SPANISH

BY



JOHN HENRY JON

VOLUME THE THIRD

LONDON

Printed for the T. & A. Neave

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Temple, and at the Strand

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REFLEXIONS

UPON

HISTORY.

SECT. I.

I. **T**HERE is the same common error prevalent among the vulgar, with respect to History, that there is with regard to Jurisprudence. I mean, that they suppose the attainment of those two faculties depends solely upon application and memory. It is commonly thought, that a man is made a great lawyer, by treasuring up in his remembrance great numbers of law texts and maxims; and a great historian, by reading and retaining many historical relations. I won't dispute, if we speak only of men learned in conversation, and historians for table talk, that any thing more is necessary. But to become

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a historian

a historian of the pen, good Lord! nothing less than the pens of the Phoenix are equal to the undertaking. The most prudent and learned bishop of Cambray, in his letter on this subject to the French Academy, said very justly, *that an excellent historian is perhaps more rare than a great poet.*

II. In fact, the critics have not been so difficult to please on the part of poetry as on the part of history; for, with the exception of one or two exquisitely nice ones, they all agree, that Homer, Virgil, and Horace, were most excellent poets, and in whom there could be found no striking defect; and they would not have scrupled to concede the same honour to Ovid, Catullus, and Propertius, if the lascivious impurity of their expressions had not tarnished the lustre of their verses. But how difficult and severe have they shewn themselves with the historians, even when they have criticised the works of the most eminent of them! The same prelate we have just quoted, observes a want of unity and order in Herodotus, and thinks Xenophon more of a novelist than a historian; and it is a general received opinion, that in his history of Cyrus he did not so much attend to relating the true actions of that prince, as to painting his own idea of a perfect king. He admits, that Polybius reasons admirably on
political

political and military matters; but observes, that he reasons too much. He celebrates the fine harangues of Thucydides and Titus Livius, but objects to their being too numerous, and seeming more like the works of their own invention, than the speeches of those, in whose mouths they put them. He blames Sallust, for having in two very short histories entered into too large a description of persons and customs. He censures Tacitus for an affected brevity, and for having had the audacity to pretend to discern and point out the political springs and causes of all kinds of events; which is also a defect he reprehends in Henricus Catherinus.

III. In these same great historians, other critics find out other faults. Plutarch observes, that Herodotus is invidious and spiteful against Greece. It is a general opinion, that he mixed many fables with his history, which he carried to such a length, that there have been some, who, instead of bestowing on him the magnificent epithet of the Father of History, have called him the inventor of fable. Dionysius Halicarnassus denies the language of Xenophon to be splendid or majestic, adding, that whenever he attempts to elevate his stile, he instantly falls off, and shews himself unable to support it. Vossius remarks, that the stile of Polybius is

4 REFLEXIONS UPON HISTORY.

inaccurate; and Father Rapin, that he frequently interrupts the thread of his narration with moral reflections. The same Vossius arraigns the style of Thucydides, as harsh and full of hyperboles. Erasmus points out some contradictions in Titus Livius; and Asinius Pollio remarks some Patavian or provincial expressions in his Latin. Many, and with great reason, blame him as a multiplier of prodigies. Aulus Gellius called Sallust *a coiner of words* *; and the illustrious Cato blames him for suffering himself to be warped by his prejudices and dislikes, and for having concealed many of the glorious actions of Cicero, because he was upon ill terms with him. Charles Sigonius thinks the language of Tacitus was trite; and father Caussin says the same thing in other words; father Bayle also detects Henricus Catherinus, in giving certain relations that were contrary to truth.

IV. Who, upon the sight of all this, would, without a trembling hand, take up the pen to write a history? Who, upon seeing all these celebrated historians so arraigned, could think himself qualified to escape censure?

* I apprehend this should not be understood in so extensive a sense as father Feyjoo represents it, for that the expression in Aulus Gellius is *a reviewer of obsolete words*.

S E C T.

S E C T. II.

V. But what happened to Quintus Curtius is more extraordinary than any thing we have hitherto mentioned. This author's history of Alexander made its first appearance about three centuries ago; the manuscript having been found in the library of Saint Victor. It is not yet known with any certainty who Quintus Curtius was, nor in what time he lived. Some believe he was contemporary with Augustus, others with Claudius, others with Vespasian, and others with Trajan; according as his stile appears to them to approach nearer to, or differ more from, the antient purity of the Latin idiom; and there are not wanting those, who think that such a man as Quintus Curtius never existed, and that this was a fictitious name, under which some modern author had concealed himself, in hopes that his history would be better received by annexing to it a name resembling that of an antient writer; and some again have attributed this work to Petrarch. One of the strongest foundations on which they build this conjecture, is, that you cannot find Quintus Curtius quoted by any author, who has wrote within the fourteen hundred years immediately posterior to the reign of Augustus. Notwithstanding this, the purity of the stile has such

weight with others, as to make them judge that it is full that time since any one could write so pure Latin as is contained in the language of that book; and therefore they suppose the author of this history was contemporary with some of the first Cæsars. But be this as it may, the history, which goes under the title of Quintus Curtius, continued to be universally applauded for the space of three centuries; when at length a modern critic set himself to scrutinize and examine it attentively, and found it to be full of substantial defects.

VI. This was the famous John Le Clerc, who weaves into the end of his second volume on the Art of Criticism, a long examination of Quintus Curtius, and arraigns and charges him, proving the accusation at the same time, with having been deficient in the following requisites: that he was very ignorant of astronomy and geography: that, for the sake of accumulating in his history many marvellous relations, he wrote many fables: that he described some things ill, and fell into manifest contradictions: that he inserted useless accounts, and omitted necessary ones: that, in order to display his eloquence, he incurred the impropriety of putting excellent harangues into the mouths of men, who had but little pretensions to oratory: that he gave
Greek

Greek names to the most remote rivers of Asia: that he omitted the circumstance of dates or time in his relations of events: that he had chosen a stile which was better suited to a declaimer or an orator than an historian: that, finally, he had been more the panegyrist than the historian of Alexander, and had celebrated his damnable ambition, as if it had been an heroic virtue.

VII. Truly, these are many and grave defects, to be imputed to a man of the supreme credit of Curtius, and would even be thought such, if they were charged on a writer of the middle class. But all that we can infer from hence is, that either the critics have been very severe in their censure, or else, that the task of writing a history free from defects is an exceeding arduous one. But it appearing to me, that the accusation of Le Clerc is well supported, and just in every part of it, I am inclined to think, that the most elevated genius who applies himself to the occupation of an historian, can never be secure from falling into considerable defects; and to confirm this sentiment, I have quoted the example of Quintus Curtius.

S E C T. III.

VIII. I believe, that it fares with the most excellent writings, as it happens to the greatest men, that they appear much less upon nearer and more frequent intercourse with them. There is no entity in nature totally perfect; but at first sight, or at certain distances, and in certain points of view, the splendor of excellencies conceal some defects, which, by approaching nearer to the objects, and upon closer examination, are discovered.

IX. It is also certain, that elevated geniuses are more exposed and liable to some particular defects than middling ones. The first, carried away either by the vivacity of their imaginations, or the force and impetuosity of their spirit, are addicted not to attend to some of those requisites and regulations which people of inferior capacities scrupulously observe; and, for that reason, these last are much more likely to compile a work that is strictly conformable to rule, than the others; for, as they never attempt to rise to any considerable height, their fall cannot be great. They always pursue an humble path, never lose sight of the precepts, and are content to move on, controlled by, and in subjection to, the rules.

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The others, suffering themselves to be transported by a generous flight to a greater degree of altitude, are apt not to discern things below, they being at a considerable distance from them. The departing sometimes from rules, in order to pursue a course superior to ordinary precepts, has this effect, that it makes a work appear with a better grace.

X. But this is not the predicament in which we at present find ourselves, either with respect to the defects of Quintus Curtius, or with regard to the dangers of writing history. I should esteem as a phoenix, not only him who could steer clear of every kind of fault, for this appears to me next to impossible, but the person who should avoid falling into one or other of the most remarkable ones; and he, who adverts with attention to the multitude of difficulties which present themselves in the course of writing a history, will not hesitate to be of my opinion.

S E C T. IV.

XI. Let us begin with the stile, which at first sight seems the most easy part of all: how difficult and arduous is it, to hit upon that precise medium which is suitable to, and required for history? It should neither be vulgar nor poetic,
although

10 REFLEXIONS UPON HISTORY.

although if a writer will content himself with only avoiding those two extremes, he may without much difficulty hit upon one, (especially if he is of the numerous set which nature has limited, and does not permit to go beyond a middling stile) that neither borders on the vulgar, nor is tinged with the poetic, and is equally distant from the croaking of the raven, and the chant of the swan. But by being contented with this, the narrative would be left without grace, and the history without attraction. This medium is not reprehensible, but it is insipid. Some of those who undertake to write histories are incapable of arriving so far as this degree of excellence; and they are very few, who can go beyond it. These few have many dangerous rocks and shoals in their way; and it is extremely difficult now and then to avoid striking upon one or other of them. Affectation is the most common fault that is incurred, and also the worst; for a barbarous expression is less disgusting to me than an affected one; as a clown cloathed in his ordinary habit, set off with rustic trappings, is less unpleasing in my eye, than a person finely dressed in a gay suit, bedecked with jewels, which are ill chosen, and awkwardly disposed. The first dresses himself humbly and in character; the second is adorned fantastically and ridiculously. All in the stile, which is not natural,

natural, is contemptible; and although a natural colour gives beauty to the face; whenever we perceive it is imitated with artificial ingredients, it appears disgusting to us.

XII. To the danger of running into an affected stile, there is annexed another, which is, the hazard of that appearing affectation to the reader, which is not so. Some judge so grossly in this matter, as to think, that whatever does not appear natural to them, seems unnatural to every body else. Sometimes envy excites an illiberal censurer to call a stile affected, when he does not think it so; and occasions him, like an ill-tempered woman, who has a bad skin, to exclaim that all those who have better complexions have created them by means of artificial paints and washes. But, after all, the hazards that an author is exposed to from the quarter of ignorance, and the envy of readers, are unavoidable; and, if he was to be discouraged by this, there are none but ignorant and dull writers who would venture to take pen in hand. Let him who deserves some applause content himself with having deserved it; and make himself happy with this reflection, that there will not be wanting those who will do justice to his merit. Nor should he attempt any punishment of an envious man, but leave the execution of that business

ness to himself; for nobody could impose on him a more cruel one than that which is inflicted by his own furious rancour, that is incessantly gnawing his heart.

S E C T. V.

XIII. The second danger of a lofty stile is, that the pen, instead of taking a flight to the top of Olympus, may wing its course to that of Parnassus; I mean, that, instead of arriving at the degree of sublimity which is proper for history, it may soar to that which is adapted to poetry. Every species of undertaking has its correspondent language; but I do not assent to the distribution which is commonly made of different stiles to different undertakings, and which assigns to history the medium between the sublime and the humble. There is a sublimity requisite for history, although it is different from that which is required for poetry; and also from that which is necessary in oratory. Who entertains a doubt of the stile of Livy, of Sallust, and of Tacitus, being sublime? But they are all three very different, not only from that of Virgil, of Claudian, and the other heroic poets, but even very different from each other. They are much mistaken, who confine sublimity of stile to an indivisible and fixed point. Elocution has many
different

different graces and ornaments, and the pen may be elevated by various ways. I do not think it so difficult to hit upon the sublime which is proper for oratory and poetry, as it is upon that which is suited to history; because, in the two first, the frequency of tropes and figures give of themselves a magnificence to the stile; in the last, all the elevation must consist in the liveness of the expressions, the natural energy of the phrases, the depth of the conceptions, and the keenness of the sentences; nor must they presume to take the liberties which are practised by the orators and poets; because hyperbole is apt to disfigure the truth, and because integrity and judgement suit but ill with the raptures of imagination; and because also elevations of the pen make it in some measure difficult for ignorant people to comprehend the relation. That tedious, hyperbolic, and pompous description, which Claudian gives of the avarice of Rufinus, does not appear so admirable to me as the short, energetic, lively, and natural phrases, with which Tacitus characterizes in its full extent the misery and meaness of Galba: *Pecuniæ alienæ non cupidus, suæ parcus, publicæ avarus*. Nor does the elegant colouring, with which Ovid has painted the triumphs of vice in the iron age, appear to me equal to the profundity of that sentence, with which Livy laments the compleat and ul-

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mate corruption of the Roman people: *Ad hæc tempora perventum est, quibus nec vitia nostra possumus pati, nec remedia.*

S E C T. VI.

XIV. The last danger of elevation of stile consists in the difficulty of supporting it. But it appears to me, that the censure which is commonly passed in this respect is unjust. I have known many, who have been very scrupulous in examining whether the stile was equal, and have been very liberal in the praises of those who preserved this quality, and very free of their abuse of those who have been deficient in it. They are very exact in noting, whether an author falls, or rises it; when they ought rather to attend to the thing the pen is describing. It would be very wonderful if he should fall, who is always creeping close to the ground; and, indeed, whence can he fall from, if he is never elevated? It should be considered, on the other hand, that descending and falling are two very different things. He who takes a flight is not obliged to pursue his course at the same height or on the same level to which he rose; for he may descend at his pleasure, as even the eagles do the same. And of what consequence is his descending a little, since he always continues
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much superior to him who never rises off the ground? The very caution of those, who are so careful about not falling, proves, that they never will attempt rising to any dangerous height, for this scrupulous vigilance is not natural to sublime spirits, as they are apt to mount on the wings of the wind, and leave to imagination the route they shall pursue. They do not strive to support themselves at the point of altitude to which they rose, as the appearance of such an endeavour would give a distasteful air to the stile; for a becoming negligence is less disgusting than a forced elevation. It ought also to be considered, that the same happy manner of expressing himself does not occur to a man at all times alike; and what is he to do in such a case? give a loose to the pen, till it happens to fall upon phrases equally energetic, and delicate with the antecedent? What labour can be supposed more ridiculous than that of an author, who with an instrument in his hand is always taking the height to which he has raised his stile above the humble level, for the purpose of avoiding suffering it to descend below that fixed point of altitude? I therefore think the neglecting to do this is not a defect in a writer, but rather argues that he is mistaken who censures him for the omission. But the want of judgment or candour

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in him who criticises, is always dangerous to him who writes.

XV. Besides this, the difference of objects produces of itself, and makes necessary, such an inequality as we have just hinted. There are some which naturally inflame the idea, and hurry on, or give a spring to the pen. There are others, which do not agitate the imagination, and should be described in plain words expressive of sound judgment. Some require majestic language, and there are others in which it would appear ridiculous. In my opinion, he would be guilty of the greatest abuse of style, who did not attend more to nature than the rules of art.

XVI. I am well aware, that the essential part of history does not consist in the excellence of style; but that this is an accidental quality, which adorns and makes it more useful. Many read it when they find the style engaging, who would not read it, if it wanted that requisite. The matter also makes a better impression on the mind, as the memory retains better what is read with delight, in the same manner that the stomach does what is eat with an appetite. An infinite number of people are acquainted with the history of the conquest of Mexico, who would have remained totally ignorant of the circumstances

circumstances of it, if they had not been written by the sublime and delicate pen of Don Antonio de Solis. Finally, Lucian lays down excellent rules for writing history; and, in a little treatise he compiled on purpose, prescribes that the style should be clear, and so far elevated as to approach nearly to the loftiness of speech made use of in poetry.

S E C T. VII.

XVII. But let us have done with the style, and relieve the historian from his care on this head; but when he is freed from this anxiety, how many shoals and dangers will still remain for him to encounter in his navigation of this sea? What strength of judgment does it require to separate the useful from the frivolous? If he relates every minute particular, he will fatigue the eyes and memories of his readers with superfluities. If he selects, he will run the hazard of rejecting with the superfluous part of the important; and prolixity, and excessive curtailings, are two extremes which he should equally avoid. If he leans to the first of these two sides, he will be censured as tiresome; if to the last, for having left the narrative confused; and but few men are capable of fixing on the just medium. Digressions are an ornament to history, and a
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relief to the reader ; but, if they are too frequent, very long, impertinent, or injudiciously introduced, they convert the ornament into a deformity. It is a nice matter, and requires great penetration and judgment, to avoid inserting too much, or leaving out something material; and it is more difficult for an historian to hit upon a right method of proceeding, than any other author. If he is very attentive about preserving the series of dates and time, he will be apt to interrupt the thread of his relation ; and, if he endeavours to keep his narration of these things connected, he will be liable to lose the æras and dates when they happened. It is a most arduous and difficult task to weave the threads of history and chronology together in such a manner, as that neither of them shall interrupt or obscure each other. Sometimes it also happens, that events crowd in upon, and embarrass one another, because it may fall out, that when you come to the middle of a narration, which till then had gone on smooth and uninterrupted, you find it necessary to postpone the remainder, and insert some other distinct account, the circumstances of which happened posterior to the beginning, and prior to the end, of the first relation. The worst is, that it is not possible to give rules for surmounting these difficulties ; for this is a matter which must be left intirely

intirely to the perspicuity and discretion of the writer. On these depend the choice where to place things, and the manner of inserting them. If genius is wanting to effect this, the author must have recourse to the method fallen upon by many others of these times, which is composing a history after the manner of a news paper, where all the relations are promiscuously thrown together, in the same way that ingredients are mixed for making minced pyes.

XVIII. *For the purpose of preserving nice order in a history* (says the before-quoted Archbishop of Cambray), *it would be necessary that the writer, before he takes pen in hand, should have the whole scope of the undertaking collected together in his imagination; that he should be able to discern the whole extension of it at a glance; and that he should turn it over and over in his mind, till he can fix on the just point of view in which to exhibit it. All this, to the end that he may preserve its unity, and derive, as from one source only, all the principal events of which it is composed. And a little lower he says: A historian of genius, out of twenty stations, will chuse the most opportune wherein to introduce a fact, so that by being placed in that situation, it will throw a light upon many others. Sometimes, by anticipating the relation of an event, you will facilitate the understanding of others, which*

preceded it in point of date; and at other times, another will appear to better advantage, by the account of it being postponed. This is all very well observed, and all tends to shew the great difficulties there are in writing a history with propriety.

S E C T. VIII.

XIX. But the most arduous part lies in ascertaining what is of the most importance of all, which is the truth. A great modern critic said, very justly, that it is very frequent for historical truth to be as impenetrable as philosophical. The last lies hid in the well of Democritus; the first is either buried in the sepulchre of oblivion, is obscured by the clouds of doubt, or has retired behind the shoulders of fable. I believe we may apply to history the remark of Virgil upon fame, for they are nearly allied, and the first, very frequently, the child of the latter.

Tam facti, pravique tenax, quam nuntia veri.

XX. From hence, some have taken occasion to distrust the best attested histories, and others have had the audacity to doubt the most certain informations. That famous philosopher Campanella said, he doubted whether there ever was
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such an emperor in the world as Charles the fifth; and Charles Sorrel not only denied that Pharamond conquered the kingdom of France, but also doubted his existence. In the republic of letters, they give an account of a man who had assured Voffius, that he had wrote a treatise, in which he had proved with invincible arguments, that all Cæsar said in his Commentaries, relating to his wars in Gaul, was false; for that he had incontestably demonstrated, that Cæsar never passed the Alps. An anonymous writer, before a hundred years had elapsed after the death of Henry the third of France, had the rashness to affirm, in a book, intituled “la Fatilité de Saint Cloud,” that Jacob Clement did not put that prince to death. Such monstrous instances of distrust, and audacity, does the uncertainty of history produce.

S E C T. IX.

XXI. Seneca reduces the want of truth in history, to three principles or causes, which are credulity, negligence, and a propensity to lying in historians: *Quidam creduli, quidam negligentes sunt: quibusdam mendacium obrepit, quibusdam placet: illi non evitant, hi appetunt.* (lib. 7. Natur. Quæst. cap. 16.) He omitted to point out two other principles, which are sometimes the

impossibility of coming at the truth, and at others the want of critical judgment to discern it.

XXII. Lying historians occasion others who are not lyars to relate many fables. It seems as if the greatest diligence of an historian, who relates the event of remote ages, can enable him to do no more than examine carefully the authors who lived at that time, or immediately after it, and to give the sum of their relations faithfully. But how often has flattery or resentment been known to warp the pens of those very authors? The first of these faults was remarked by Tacitus, in those writers, who related the affairs of Tiberius, Cayus, Claudius, and Nero, in the life-time of those Cæsars; and the second, in those who gave an account of them a short time after their deaths: *Tiberii, Caiique, Claudii, ac Neronis, res florentibus ipsis, ob metum falsæ, postquam occiderant, recentibus odiis compositæ sunt.* By so much the nearer historians are to the circumstances they relate, in so much a nearer point of view do they see the truth, and are so much the better enabled to distinguish it; but in proportion to these opportunities of their knowing it, are the suspicions that various affections induce them to conceal it. Fear, hope, love, and hatred, are four strong winds which violently agitate the pen, and will not permit the
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nib of it to rest or dwell on the point of truth. We shall select two examples, out of a great number of others, that might be produced to prove this assertion, which are Procopius a Greek historian, and Velleius Paterculus a Roman one. The last of these, after having given an excellent account of the things appertaining to Rome, in the anterior ages, when he came to relate those of his own times, fouled the page of his history with gross adulations of Tiberius, and his favourite Sejanus; and heaped the highest eulogiums, on the heads, of two of the most perfidious and flagitious men that were known in that corrupt age. Procopius, in his *Secret History*, describes the Emperor Justinian, and the Empress Theodora, as the most abominable prince and princess upon earth. Paterculus lived under Tiberius, and Procopius under Justinian; and, as they were both men of rank, and filled considerable employments, could not be ignorant of the reality of things. But envy in one, and dependence in the other, caused them both, equally to deviate from the truth.

XXIII. This was the reason why Mons. du Haillan, a noble French historian, terminated his general history of France with the reign of Charles the seventh; nor have we a trace of his pen, respecting the monarchs who succeeded

immediately after that time. But let us hear what Mons. du Haillan says in the prologue to his history, because it is admirably suited to the subject we are upon. He says, *although we must admit Francis the first was a great and an excellent king, nevertheless, because all the histories which speak of him were written in his own time, or in that of his son Henry, the authors of them were more lavish of their eulogiums of him than his merit deserved, or than were consistent with the obligations they owed to truth as historians; and that this is a vice which all those are apt to fall into who write histories of their own times, or of the princes of whom they are the immediate subjects.* Thus we see, those who write the history of their own times, are agitated by many passions which seduce them to lie openly, either to favour or blazon their own prince and nation, or to misrepresent and blacken their enemies.

XXIV. The saying of Pescenius Niger, to a man who wanted to repeat to him a panegyric which he had written in his praise, is very applicable to this matter: "Compose," says he, "panegyrics upon Marius, Hannibal, and other great captains who are dead; for blazoning living emperors, from whom you entertain hopes and expectations, or of whom you stand

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“ in fear, favours more of banter than encomium.”

S E C T. X.

XXV. What we have said of those who write the history of their own times, may be applied equally to them who relate the affairs of their own country. These are generally believed to be the best informed, but at the same time their impartiality is the most suspected. So that truth navigates the sea of history, always surrounded by the dangerous rocks of ignorance and prejudice. With respect to many things which are of great importance, and incumbent on an historian to relate, he may want information; with regard to those which he takes an interest in, and looks upon as his own, his prejudices induce him to speak against his conviction. Polybius remarks, that Fabius, a Roman historian, and Philenus a Carthaginian one, are so opposite in their accounts of the Punic war, that, according to the first, all is glorious for the Romans, and ignominious to the Carthaginians; and according to the other directly the contrary.

XXVI. From hence arises the embarrassment, which is ever occurring in the comparison of different histories, with respect to one and the same

same fact. Who, for example, could know better what passed in the wars between France and Spain, than the French and Spaniards themselves? But if we set ourselves to examine the authors of the different nations, we shall find them as opposite in their accounts of the motives which led to the facts, as in their relation of the facts themselves. Whom should we give credit to? Why that is not so easy to determine; but we know for certain, who believes who. The Spaniards believe the Spanish authors, and the French the French ones. The same passion, which causes writers to describe things favourably to their own country, induces readers to believe what they write.

XXVII. It is not one enemy only which militates against the truth in national authors. I mean that it is not only love, but fear also, which makes them depart from the line of right; for, when they are not blinded by their own passions, they are warped and impeded by those of other people. They well know, that a history of their own nation, written with frankness and candour, will be but ill received by their fellow citizens; and who has so stout a heart as to resolve upon exposing himself to the hatred of his countrymen? Even where the attainment of eternal happiness

happiness is the object of a man's contemplation, we find very few martyrs to the truth.

XXVIII. The example of our great historian Father John Mariana, will afford but little encouragement for others to imitate him ; or to speak more properly, it will rather deter them from doing it. That Jesuit was a great lover of the truth, and adopted it as the sole or ultimate object of his history ; but his not being partial, which is the greatest glory of a historian, was imputed to him by many national people for ignominy ; and because he disdained to lie or flatter, they calumniate him for being disaffected to his country. They go still further, and by accusing him of having an affection or partiality for France, impute the motive of their own conduct to the author ; this they do with such confidence, that I should be apt to believe them, if I did not see that he was equally ill treated by both Frenchmen and Spaniards. It is an established fact, that his book, intitled, *de Rege & Regis institutione*, was condemned by authority, to be burnt by the hands of the common hangman, at Paris ; and for what ? why because he arraigned in it the conduct of Henry the third, king of France. Thus, in both the nations, they did injury and injustice to Father Mariana, for having been sincere and candid. In Spain
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they would have him write nothing but what was glorious to their own nation ; in France, they would not permit him to touch the hem of the garment of king Henry. In this manner is the world continually laying stumbling blocks, to obstruct truth in history ; and those few who have been disposed to write it, from pure motives of integrity, have always found themselves trammelled and embarrassed by the prejudices of others.

XXIX. Not only the natural dispositions of historians to favour their own country, but sometimes the hope of reward, or the fear of resentment, have occasioned their being partial to foreign ones. No man was more lavish in his applauses of the Venetians than Marcus Sabellicus, who was not a Venetian himself. He wrote the history of Venice, more in the stile and character of a panegyrist than a historian. This might seem strange ; but Julius Cæsar Scaliger informs us, that the gold of the republic made him consider that country as his own. By way of contrast to this, these same Venetians were much offended with John de Capriara, a noble Genoese historian, for some relations he had given, which were unfavourable to their arms ; but the answer this author made to the expressions of their resentment is worthy
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the imitation of all other authors in the like cases. He replied, *the Venetians should be angry with Fortune and not with me ; for as the events of the war were unhappy for them, I could not represent them fortunate, for the sake of making them grateful and pleasing to their palates.*

S E C T. XI.

XXX. The bias of religion is not less forcible, but has rather more power than the national to warp truth from the line of right in history. The impositions which some protestant historians have palmed on the world, in order to calumniate the characters of many popes, are shocking ; their fictions of adulteries, simonies, and homicides, have been insufficient to satisfy their envy, or satiate their resentment against the supreme head of the church ; for they have extended their rage to charging popes, who were extremely venerable for their virtue, with committing crimes of the blackest die. What wickedness did they not impute to that most venerable pope, Gregory the seventh ? They not only accused him of intruding himself into the papal chair, of simony, and of a criminal correspondence with the virtuous Countess Matilda, but also of heresy and magic ; inventing many ridiculous tales, to prove him guilty of this last
crime,

crime. It was not against the popes alone, that they forged these monstrous extravagancies, but extended them to many of those, who by their learning and ardent zeal had signalized themselves in defence of the catholic religion. Father Theophilus Rainauld tells us, there appeared a libel against the most pious and learned Cardinal Belarmino, accusing him of having murdered many new-born infants, in order to conceal his lewd practices from the world; adding, that, touched afterwards with remorse, and a disposition to repent of his sins, he made a pilgrimage to Loretto, in order to expiate them; where the priest, to whom he confessed, struck with horror at so much wickedness, refused to give him absolution, which occasioned him in a little while after to die with despair. The best is, that Belarmino was alive when the libel was published, which he read and despised. What infamous things did Buchanan write, which even the protestants of this day believe, against the admirable Mary Queen of Scots? I am not surprized, that the unanimous testimony of all the catholic authors in her favour does not convince them, because they look upon them as partial; but I am amazed that the relation of Camden, an excellent English historian, and whom nothing but his love of the truth could induce to vindicate her, does not persuade them; and one would suppose,

suppose, the great difference of character and manners between Buchanan and Camden would have weight in deciding the question. The first, a drunken, spiteful, debauched, man; the second, continent, modest, and a lover of historical truth; and one in whose morals you could not find the least fault; but when we see party prejudice prevail over all the persuasions of reason, it is a strong proof of its force.

XXXI. But, as the true religion does not exempt the professors of it from manifesting an indiscreet zeal against its enemies, there are not a few catholic historians who have fallen into this very vice. From hence arose the suppositions, that Luther was born of a devil incubate; that the false prophet Mahomed was of mean extraction; that Anna Bolene was the daughter of Harry the eighth; that this unhappy woman, hurried away by an unbridled lust in her tender years, and long before she became the object of that prince's love, committed a thousand turpitudes; with other fables of the same kind. The worst is, that as every infamous libel against those of an opposite religion is easily believed; it soon, from the most improbable and scandalous satyr, comes to be translated into history. In consequence of this, five hundred authors are afterwards cited in support of a fable,
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the whole of whose authority, when the thing comes to be examined, originates in the libel from whence the tale was derived.

S E C T. XI.

XXXII. If only the interest of the prince of the state, or of religion, attracted the pen of the historian, and caused it to deviate from the truth; we should at least have the satisfaction to suppose, that with respect to those facts which have no relation to the party he follows, or the power he obeys, an historian would not wish to deceive us. But the private or particular motives which may excite him to deception are so numerous, that even with respect to these facts, we can seldom say we are secure. Who can form an idea of the affections which possess the heart of an author, whom he does not know, nor has had any intercourse with? Who can determine to how many objects his love or hatred extend? Even with regard to those facts which seem the most remote, either from his affections or his interest, he may be swayed by his prejudices or his convenience; and sometimes historians lie, when their motives for doing it are incomprehensible, of which we will proceed to give an example.

XXXIII.

XXXIII. Peter Mathé, a famous French historian, tells us, that one la Brosse, a physician and mathematician at Paris, had foretold the death of Henry the fourth, and had communicated his prediction in confidence to the Duke de Vendome. Peter Petit, another historian, who was much celebrated for his knowledge of human nature, assures us, that such a prediction never existed. These two men were both contemporaries, both resided at Paris, were both there at the death of Henry the fourth, and both knew the physician la Brosse; but with all this, as they give diametrically opposite testimonies, it is very clear that one or other of them must lie. If it should be urged, that one of them might be deceived by some sinister information, I answer, that could not be the case, for they both quote the Duke de Vendome as their author. Peter Mathé says, he had the thing just as he relates it from the duke himself: Peter Petit says, he asked the Duke de Vendome if what Peter Mathé had related was true; and that the duke replied, it was false.

XXXIV. This is a contradiction, capable of exciting many reflexions on the uncertainty of history. If it had not happened, that an author in the situation and circumstances of Peter Petit

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had contradicted Peter Mathé, who would have ventured to question the prediction of la Brosse? In what author could concur superior requisites to establish a fact? A historian of reputation, who was contemporary with the event, lived in the same city with the astrologer where the tragical death of Henry happened, and who heard the prediction from the only witness who could possibly give testimony to the truth of it; and this was a man of the rank and quality of the Duke de Vendome. What further evidence could the most rigid critic demand, to engage his assent to an historical fact? With all this, unless we transfer the deception to Peter Petit, we are under a necessity of declaring, that Peter Mathé advanced a falsehood; for the same circumstances equally concurred, to induce giving credit to the first as the last of them. Thus are we reduced to a necessity of acknowledging, in spite of all the critical aid we can call in to our assistance, that we are unable to ascertain the truth of this relation. Nor will transferring the deception to the Duke de Vendome, and saying, that he told one person one thing, and another another, remove the historical difficulty; for, as historians seldom relate events of which they were eye witnesses, and as the most they can do, is to make use of the testimony of credible evidences, your calling in question whether they

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were so or not, would, by extending to them the danger of propagating falsehoods, be adding a new difficulty to the certainty of history; for at this rate, it would not suffice that an historian himself is a man of veracity; but it would be also requisite, that those from whom he had his information should be men of veracity likewise; and sometimes the intelligence passes through so many different channels, from the æra of the fact to its arrival at the pen of the historian, that it seems exceedingly improbable to suppose, that in its passage through one or other of these channels, there shall not be something added or diminished; nor can it be insured, that it shall not come to him totally changed and disfigured; for the same thing happens in this case as in morality, *malum ex quocumque defectu*. If, from one to another, a relation goes through the mouths of ten different individuals, by its passage through the mouth of one of them, who is not a scrupulous observer of the truth, it will be vitiated, and occasion its appearing corrupted in the page of history. Who, upon contemplation of this, will not be astonished at those, who believe every thing to be true as the Gospel, which they read in an author who writes the history of his own times?

XXXV. We may with great probability, and without any violent or strained supposition, conclude, that the facility with which the verification of astrological predictions has been imposed on the world, was owing solely to their not having in their origin met with the contradiction which that of Peter Mathé did. If the refutation of a fable does not immediately follow its invention, there is afterwards no remedy.

XXXVI. But leaving it for the present undetermined at whose door the deception lay, what can we suppose could be the motive of either of these historians, to quote the Duke de Vendôme falsely as his author? - It might, in Peter Mathé, be his friendship for the astrologer, whose fame he wanted to raise as a foreteller of events: it might proceed also, from a desire of adorning his history with a curious and pleasing anecdote. On the part of Peter Petit, might intervene his dislike to astrologers; or he might also deny the truth of the prediction, because it clashed with the system of his dissertation upon comets, which is the book in which he denies it. According to this mode of reasoning, it is easy to assign other motives of inducement; but it is not quite so easy to hit upon the true one.

S E C T.

S E C T. XIII.

XXXVII. Thus, you see, we on all sides are beset with hazards. The authors who are remote from the time when, and the places where events happened, are very much exposed to be deceived in one or other of the various ways, by which informations descend to them; and those who were contemporaries with the events, and lived in the places where they fell out, are frequently interested by a variety of circumstances and combinations to disfigure them.

XXXVIII. We have said, that perhaps Peter Mathé, without any foundation, and without any other motive than that of adorning his history with a curious tale, related the prediction of la Brosse; and to a desire of doing this, we have also imputed the cause of an infinite number of other historical errors, for there is no other author whatever, who does not interest himself in making his history appear pleasant and delightful to his readers; and there is nothing tends more to produce this effect, than inserting in them many particulars, in which are contained something of the curious, the exquisite, and the admirable. It may be generally said, that there are no histories more pleasant to read, than those

which approach nearest to novels. From whence it happens, that truth is often dispensed with, for the sake of *edulcorating* the narrative with fiction.

XXXIX. Upon what other principle than the foregoing, can we account for authors relating many things as the events of very remote ages, without ever having read them in any antient author, or found any traces of them in an antient monument? or for their having, to events which they found related at large, in order to make the account more entertaining, added a variety of circumstances of their own invention? I therefore say, whenever the fiction appears grateful to the reader, and he cannot assign any other motive for the author's inserting it, he may reasonably conclude, it was done with no other view, than that of making his history more pleasing to those who read it; and how much of this, do we meet with in numbers of authors!

XL. The account of the great battle, in which Charles Martel and the Duke of Aquitaine routed the numerous army of Saracens, that, under the command of Abdarramen, had made an irruption into France, we find related in a very concise and summary way by the authors of that day, and the times which immediately

diately followed it. Notwithstanding this, some modern authors give so prolix and circumstantial a relation of it, that it seems as if they themselves had been present at, and personally engaged in it. This is an observation of Cordemoy's, whose words I shall insert here, because they are very remarkable. He says, *the particulars of this battle were worthy of being recorded, and the antient authors are exceedingly reprehensible for not having given a circumstantial account of so memorable an action; but in the eyes of all those who are lovers of truth, some modern authors also, whose merit in other respects is great, are inexcusable, for having given relations of this event, which are so minute and circumstantial, that one might be led to think they had assisted at all the councils of war preceding it, and had seen all the motions of the two armies; for they not only describe how the French and Saracens were armed, but how they disposed and arranged their troops; give us the harangues of the chiefs on each side; tell us the stratagems which Abdarramen made use of, and the measures Charles Martel took to frustrate them; and finally, they proceed to describe the particular positions in which the dead bodies lay on the field, the groans and lamentations of the dying, together with all the circumstances of the congratulations which passed between the French chiefs after the battle.* The moderns which Cordemoy censures

in this place, are Paulus Emilius, and Fauchet, for he points them out in the margin.

XLI. There is nothing more doubtful, than the motives which induced Constantine to put to death his wife the empress Fausta, and his son Crispin whom he had by the concubine Helen. Authors disagree so much respecting this point, that they represent the circumstances of this double tragedy in more than twenty different ways; one of which is, that Fausta, being in love with Crispin, solicited him to a criminal intercourse with her; but that, finding him firm in refusing to comply with her desires, she, irritated with the refusal, transferred her own crime to Crispin, and accused him to Constantine of having made lewd advances to her, for which Constantine caused him to be put to death; and that coming afterwards to the true knowledge of the fact, he ordered her to be put to death also. This is the way Simeon Metaphraste relates the case, who is not one of the most exact authors, and of whom cardinal Belarmine said, that he was addicted to write things, not as they were, but as they ought to be. Father Causinus, in the second volume of his work, intitled *la Corte Santa*, not only adopts the relation of Metaphraste as true, but paraphrases it according to his own fancy, decorating the tragedy with

with all the circumstances which he thought would suit well with, and were applicable to an event of this nature. He paints the beauty of Crispin, describes the origin and progress of the love of Fausta, the manner in which she disclosed it to him; her mortification at finding her offers rejected, and the artifice she made use of to be revenged; and adds at last, what had never been suggested by Metaphraste, nor any other writer, that, stung with piercing remorse and grief upon hearing of the death of Crispin, she became her own accuser to Constantine, and declared her criminality, and the innocence of the unhappy youth.

XLII. I should be sorry if what I have just now said, should induce in my readers, a disesteem for two such respectable writers, as Paulus Emilius, and father Nicholas Causinus. I know the great merit of both the one and the other of them, and I venerate more in the second, the candour of his mind, and the integrity of his heart, than his great wisdom and learning. He, in a particular instance of his life, gave a striking proof of his virtue; which was, that, in order to guide in a right train the conscience of a monarch, who, by making him his confessor, had confided to him the direction of his religious conduct, he had voluntarily exposed himself to,

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and felt the effects of the resentment of a furious and vindictive minister, who governed every thing. But the greatest men, sometimes give tokens of their being no more than men; and I have purposely noted these defects in two authors, so celebrated as Paulus Emilius and father Caufinus; in order to shew, how strong the temptation is in a writer, to ornament his history with something of his own invention, if authors of the especial credit of those I have just mentioned, are now and then liable to fall into this mistake.

XLIII. Our eloquent countryman, the illustrious Guevara, has been very much taken notice of for having used this licence, not only by foreign authors, but those of our own nation also; which freedom he has exercised to such a degree, that Nicholas Antonio says, he took the liberty of ascribing to antient authors his own fictions, and sported and made as free with all history, as a man would do with the fables of Esop, or the fictitious tales of Lucian. His life of Marcus Aurelius, with respect to the veracity of it, is not held in better estimation among the critics, than the Cyrus of Xenophon. It certainly cannot be denied, that he did not scruple to introduce circumstances of fancy and imagination into his writings, when he thought they would

would contribute strikingly to the entertainment of the reader: such for example (in order to point out the cause or origin of the extraordinary cruelty of Caligula) as that of attributing it to the conduct or disposition of the nurse that suckled him, who was a masculine fierce woman, and had for some slight offence killed another woman, whose blood she bathed her nipples with; and, while they were wet with it, applied the lips of the infant Caligula to them. He quotes Dion Cassius as his author for this tale, although in Dion Cassius there is no such relation to be found.

S E C T. XIV.

XLIV. We have not as yet said any thing of the fictitious chronicles, and supposititious Histories imputed to various authors, such as Dictys of Crete, Abdias of Babylon, the many fabricated by Annias of Viterbo, Berosus, Manethon, Megasthenes, and Fabius Pictor; the Cave of Magdeburgh, cited by Ruxnerus, the Encolpio invented by Thomas Elliot; together with the Chronicles of Flavius Dexter, Marcus Maximus, Aubertus, and many others, of which in Spain there has been so much talk. These supposititious histories were the fountains, from whence were derived innumerable errors, for before the imposture

posture of them was discovered, many writers, who were men of veracity, deduced accounts from them, which they afterwards came to be named as the authors of; nor was the circumstance of their having imbibed them at those vitiated fountains, ever adverted to. This species of writings, may be compared to the doblons, which they say are put into peoples hands by the Devil; they at first have the appearance of gold, but are afterwards found to be charcoal. How great was the transport of Wolfangus Lacy, a man in other respects very learned, when he fancied that in a corner of Corinthia, he had met with the manuscript of Abdias of Babylon. Great numbers of editions of this book were published in a short space of time, it being universally thought, that the world had found in it a most precious treasure. It may be easily conceived, that a work of an author of such eminence as one of the seventy-two disciples of our Lord Christ, and the Bishop of Babylon, established by the apostles themselves, would have been thought of inestimable value, provided it had been genuine. But the deception was afterwards discovered, by the very context of the relation; and Pope Paul the Fourth, condemned the book as apocryphal.

S E C T.

S E C T. XV,

XLV. With all the principles and causes hitherto pointed out, of error in history, co-operates that of little reading. He who reads little, frequently mistakes the doubtful for the certain, and sometimes the false also. Generally speaking, in all the human theoretic faculties, much study produces an effect different from that produced by mathematical study. In this last science, the more a man studies, the more he knows; in the others, the more he reads, the more he doubts. In the mathematics, the study proceeds to remove doubts; in the others, it goes on to increase them. For instance, he who studies philosophy only under one master, all that master says, provided he is one of those who speak positively and decidedly, he takes for granted. If he afterwards extends his inquiries, and has recourse to others, although they should be of the same school, the Aristotelic for example, he will begin to entertain doubts, which will be occasioned by the nature of their disputes among themselves; but he will still retain a firm assent to the principles in which they are all agreed. If he afterwards reads with reflexion, and free from all prejudice or pre-occupation, the works of authors of other sects, he will begin to entertain doubts of even the principles themselves.

XLVI. The

XLVI. The same thing happens with respect to history. He who reads a general history of the world, a kingdom, or a century, in one author only, takes for granted all that is advanced by that author; and when, in any future time, it occurs to him to speak or to write on the subject, he asserts with confidence all he has read in that author. If, afterwards, he applies himself to read books written by other authors on the same subject, he will begin to entertain doubts of what he read in the first, and the further he extends his reading, the more he will increase his doubts; it being infallible, that the new contradictions which he will ever find in authors, must beget in his mind a succession of fresh doubts, till at last he will perceive many relations to be either false or doubtful, which, in the beginning, he looked upon as absolutely certain.

XLVII. In order to give a palpable demonstration of this truth, and to point out some of the common errors of history, which is the principal object I always have in view; I will introduce in this place, a catalogue of many and various events of different ages; which already in the general run of books, and the opinion of the vulgar, pass for indisputable, and will, at the same

same time, state together with them, the reasons for placing them in a doubtful point of view, or the evidence which convicts them of falsehood.

S E C T. XVI.

The beautiful Helen.

XLVIII. Let us begin to clear up these mistakes and contradictions, where profane history begins. It is generally assented to, that the rape of Helen, executed by Paris the son of Priam, and the refusal of the Tojans to deliver her up to her husband Menelaus, was the cause of the Trojan war. The common opinion supposes, that, after this transaction, Helen lived in Troy with Paris during the whole time of the war.

XLIX. This fact, which is taken for granted, is not so certain as not to admit of serious doubts respecting the truth of it. Herodotus, although he allows of her having been carried away forcibly by Paris, denies that she ever was in Troy. He says, that from Greece Paris carried his beautiful prize to a port in Egypt, where king Protheus took her away from him; and says likewise, it is true the Greeks commenced the war against Troy, upon a supposition that Helen was confined there; and that although the
Trojans,

Trojans, with great positiveness and truth, denied the fact, the Greeks could never be prevailed on to believe them; but that, after the war was concluded, and they were convinced of their mistake, Menelaus sailed to Egypt, and recovered his wife out of the hands of Protheus. I know very well, that Herodotus is not reputed an historian of the greatest veracity; but who of equal antiquity to Herodotus, favours the common opinion? I believe none but poets; and these deserve much less credit than Herodotus in the case of an historical event. Servius likewise, not only denies that Helen ever was in Troy, but asserts also, she was not the occasion of the war, for that it arose from the ill treatment of the Trojans to Hercules, in refusing him entrance into their city, when he went in search of his beloved Hylas.

S E C T. XVII.

Dido queen of Carthage,

L. The loves of Dido and Eneas, did not originate in the city of Carthage, but in the poem of Virgil, into which the author introduced the tale, with a view of ornamenting his work with this partly tragical, and partly festive fiction. The most learned chronologers, after exact en-
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quiry into the matter, find, that the loss of Troy, and the voyage of Eneas, were two, some say three hundred years prior to the founding of Carthage by queen Dido.

S E C T. XVIII.

Penelope, the wife of Ulysses.

LI. As the beforenamed queen was so unhappy as to have imputed to her some gross amours, which she never was guilty of; Penelope, the wife of Ulysses, has been so fortunate as to have nobody at this time dispute her honesty, because of late days it has been much the fashion to celebrate it; but this was not the case formerly. Franciscus Floridus Sabinus says, “that Homer’s representing Penelope chaste was no less a fiction, than Virgil’s representing Dido lewd.” In opposition to the pretended virtue of Penelope, he quotes the poet Lycophon, and the historian Duris of Samos; which second describes Penelope to have been a most vile prostitute; and Thomas Dempster adds, to corroborate this, the authority of an ancient historian, called Lysander, who says the same with Duris of Samos.

S E C T. XIX.

The labyrinth of Crete.

LII. Pliny gives an account of four famous labyrinths, that of Egypt, that of Crete, that of Lemnos, and that of Italy. The first was esteemed the most compleat as well as the most ancient and magnificent. That of Crete, although exceedingly inferior in grandeur to that of Egypt (for it was only so diminutive an imitation of the Egyptian one, that, according to the author before quoted, it was not a hundredth part so big), had the lot to make more noise in the world than the eminent original. This, without doubt, proceeded from the fanciful imaginations and loquacity of the Greeks, who, as it was nearer their neighbourhood, talked more of it than they did of the others; and, according to their genius and custom, transformed the truth of some immaterial facts into portentous fables: the amour of Pasiphae with Taurus, for example, who according to some was general of Minos's army, and according to others his secretary, they converted into a lascivious bestiality with a bull, and they metamorphosed the first of the two sons that were the offspring of this princess, who was begotten by the adulterer Taurus,

into a monster, which was half man and half ox, which they called a minotaur; for whose confinement the labyrinth of Crete was destined, where, with the threads of Ariadne, he was enjoined to weave in tapestry the adventures of Theseus. I say, that these fictions, promulged to all the world by the loquacity of the Greeks, made that labyrinth so famous and so much talked of, that the name of it is familiar to people of the lowest class, although they never mention, nor have the least idea of any other.

LIII. Notwithstanding this, it is probable, that such a labyrinth never existed. The most learned prelate, Peter Daniel Huet, upon the faith of some authors he quotes, whose testimony he enforces with probable conjectures of his own, firmly denies that it ever was in being; and says, the fiction was derived from two great winding caverns at the foot of Mount Idas, which were made by king Minos in digging stones at that place, wherewith to build the city of Cnoso, and other large towns. He adds, that these caverns are still remaining, and that Peter Belonius, a famous traveller of the sixteenth century, testifies his having seen them. What Pliny says, is not unfavourable to this opinion, who declares, that although in his time

there remained vestigies of the labyrinth of Egypt, which was the most antient, there were not the least traces to be found of that of Crete.

S E C T. XX.

Of Eneas, and his coming into Italy.

LIV. The coming of Eneas into Italy, his wars, and marriages with the daughter of king Latinus, have, besides the relation of the facts being opposite and contradictory, some testimonies of antiquity to controvert them. Leseches, a very ancient poet of Lesbos, is quoted, who affirms, that Eneas was given up for a slave to Pyrrhus, the son of Achilles. Demetrius, of Scepsis, says, that Eneas, after the destruction of Troy, retired to the city of Scepsis, which was situated within the Trojan dominions, and that both he and his son Ascanius reigned there. According to Hegesippus, Eneas died in retirement at Thrace. Others relate, that after the departure of the Greeks, he rebuilt the city of Troy, and reigned there. These, and many other opinions respecting Eneas, may be found in the Dictionary of Moreri.

S E C T. XXI.

Romulus.

LV. The foundation of Rome by Romulus is contested also. Jacob Hugo, in his book entitled *Vera Historia Romana*, denies his having been the founder of it. Jacob Gronovius, in a dissertation on the origin of Romulus, which is quoted in the Republic of Letters, acknowledges that he founded Rome, but says, he was a stranger, and consequently considers as fabulous all that is said of his birth, parents, and ancestors. And although these opinions are founded in mere conjectures, the doubt that arises out of them is greatly fortified by the confession of Livy, who declares the antiquities of Rome are very doubtful and obscure.

S E C T. XXII.

The cruel Busris.

LVI. The cruelty of Busris, king of Egypt, who is said to have put to death all strangers that came, or rather were brought into his dominions, has been so trumpeted by the voice of

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54 REFLEXIONS UPON HISTORY.

fame, as to become a proverb. Apolodorus was the first broacher of the rumour of this barbarity; and the poets, whose votes in establishing the truth of events are of little weight, have concurred with him in propagating it. Diodorus Siculus condemns this story for fabulous, and declares the origin of it sprung from a barbarous custom which was practised in that country, of sacrificing to the manes of Osiris all the fair-haired people that came in their way; and, as almost all the Egyptians had black-hair, the lot most commonly fell upon strangers. He adds, that Busiris, in the Egyptian language, signifies the tomb of Osiris; and the name which was meant to express the place where the sacrifice was made, by equivocation, was brought to signify the author of the cruelty. Strabo, who cites Eratosthenes for his author, who was a person very famous for his knowledge of Egyptian antiquities, and who had the care of the great library at Alexandria in the reign of Ptolemy Evergetes, asserts, that there never was in Egypt either king or tyrant of the name of Busiris; and, with regard to the origin of the fable, says just as Diodorus does.

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S E C T. XXIII.

The Two Artemisas.

LVII. We find the fame of Artemisia, queen of Caria, greatly celebrated in many histories, for her tenderness, constancy, and the conjugal affection she bore to her husband Mausoleus, for whom she erected that magnificent sepulchre, which is esteemed one of the seven wonders of the world; and we find her equally applauded for her prudent conduct and martial spirit in the war which Xerxes waged against the Greeks, and for her behaviour upon many other occasions. But in their descriptions they blended two different Artemisias in one, who were both queens of Caria, and are distinguished by antient writers. She, who, in their accounts of them, they place second, was much more antient than the other; for she was daughter of the first Lygdamis, who was the daughter of the last Hecatombe. From hence it should be observed, that she, who gave her name to the herb Artemisa, was not the wife of Mausoleus, whom Pliny has mistaken her for, but the daughter of Lygdamis; because in Hippocrates, who was anterior to the wife of Mausoleus, we find the herb called by the name of Artemisa.

S E C T. XXIV.

Dionysius the Elder.

LVIII. Dionysius the first, of Sicily, is stigmatized for one of the most merciless tyrants the world ever knew ; infomuch that we never hear his name mentioned without the addition of the epithet Tyrant. Notwithstanding this, there is room to doubt whether he was deserving of this treatment. The historian Philistus, who applauds and defends him, is known to have wrote his history while he was in a state of banishment from Syracuse, his own country, into which he had been sent by this very Dionysius ; which is a circumstance that ought to weigh with all those that don't reason like Pausanias and Plutarch, who say he flattered Dionysius, in hopes of being recalled from his banishment. But this is pure conjecture, and cannot alter the fact ; which is, that while he lived out of his dominions, and had cause to be dissatisfied with him, he praised him. The case of Thucydides with Pericles was similar to this ; and no one scruples to regard as sincere the commendations which Thucydides gives of that leader, or doubts the justness of the applause the author bestows on his virtue at a time when he was banished from Athens, and persecuted by that same Pericles.

S E C T.

S E C T. XXV.

Apelles and Campaspe.

LXIX. It is told, that when Apelles was painting the picture of Campaspe, the beautiful concubine of Alexander, naked, which he was ordered to do by that prince ; he, while he was employed in executing the task, fell violently in love with the object of his pencil ; of which Alexander being informed, manifested a piece of generosity and liberality, which had scarce ever been heard of before, in ceding Campaspe to be possessed by Apelles. Thus Pliny and Ælian relate the thing ; but this seems improbable and incompatible with what Plutarch says, who tells us, that the first woman with whom Alexander began to be incontinent, was Barsene, the beautiful widow of Memnon ; and, upon a critical examination of things, we shall find the account of Apelles with Campaspe prior to the amour of Alexander with Barsene.

S E C T. XXVI.

Sextus, Tarquin, and Lucretia.

LX. Whenever the adventure of Sextus the son of Tarquin, with the beautiful Lucretia, is talked of, people generally suppose that insult
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was perpetrated by means of immediate and rigorous violence; which is a circumstance that would greatly have aggravated the crime of the invader, and have apologized for the innocence and virtue of that generous Roman lady. But the thing, as Titus Livius and Dionysius Halicarnassus relate it, happened in the following manner. Sextus, in the dead of night, came to the bed-side of Lucretia, with a drawn sword in his hand, and after waking her intimated to her, first of all, that she should be quiet and not make a noise, for that, upon the first shriek she gave, he would plunge the sword into her bosom. To this intimation succeeded intreaties; and to the intreaties promises; which he carried so far, according to one of the before-named authors, as to assure her, that upon her condescending, he would make her his queen. When Sextus found that neither promises nor intreaties would avail, he proceeded to threatenings. He told her he would instantly put her to death, if she did not comply with his desires. This was not capable of vanquishing the constancy of Lucretia; and finally perceiving all other stratagems useless, the cunning youth had recourse to one of signal force and efficacy; which was, trying to overcome honour with honour; for this, like a diamond, resists the impression of all other entities, and can only be wrought or penetrated by those of its own species.

cies. He intimated to Lucretia, that, if she did not consent, he would not only murder her, but would put to death a slave also, whose dead body he would lay by the side of hers in her own bed; so that when day-light came, and they should be found thus lying together, she would be exposed to the public disgrace of having been an adulteress with so vile a person. Lucretia had not fortitude to resist this last attack, but surrendered her honour to escape infamy; for which criminal condescension, she afterwards punished herself with excessive rigour, by taking away her own life.

S E C T. XXVII.

The Burning Glasses of Archimedes and Proclus.

LXI. The artifice, by which we are told Archimedes burnt the Roman ships, which, under the command of Marcellus, were employed in the siege of Syracuse, has been plausibly represented by historians; and has exercised the ingenuity of not a few *mathematicians*, to find out how this could have been effected. It is said, Archimedes did it by concentrating the rays of the sun in the focus of a large burning-glass, and reflecting them on the ships. I judge, that this narration, although so much vulgarized in authors, is fabulous; and my reason for being of this opinion

nion is, that none of the antients who treat of the siege of Syracuse relate any such circumstance; nor does there appear the least mention of the burning-glasses of Archimedes, either in Polybius, Livy, Plutarch, Florus, Pliny, or Valerius Maximus: and it is very remarkable, that the three first of these authors, treat very largely and particularly of the machinations and contrivances which Archimedes made use of to destroy the Roman ships. How then is it credible, that they should all have been silent about the effect of the burning-glasses, if there had been any such things used?

The first author in whom we meet with this information is Galen; to whose testimony, besides his not being a historian by profession, and having wrote four hundred years after the siege of Syracuse, may be made another objection; which is, that he does not assert the thing positively, but only speaks of it in the general terms of its being so said.

LXII. Thus much for the fact; but, with regard to the possibility of executing the deed, the mathematicians who have disputed on the subject are of various opinions, some denying the possibility, and others affirming it. All the difficulty in the execution seems to depend upon the distance of the ships from the walls, which some suppose

suppose to have been so great, that it was next to impossible to make a burning-glass of such a size that the focus of it would have been capable of reaching them. It is proper to observe here, that the distance to which the focus or burning point may be extended, bears a certain proportion to the diameter of the glass. Some have fancied that they had found out a contrivance, by which the burning-glass might be made to set fire to a thing at any given distance; but the best mathematicians consider as chimerical, the infinite extension of the line of the focus; which being excluded, and the supposed distance the moderns allow to have been between the ships and the walls established, which, according to Father Kircher, who extends it the furthest, was thirty geometrical paces; it will hardly be found possible to have made a glass that was large enough to set the ships on fire. To obviate this difficulty, some have imagined they had recourse to the invention of many concave or parabolical glasses, which reflected the rays from one to the other. But I can't help remarking on the mathematicians, who have treated of this matter, a great mistake, which they have been led into with regard to the supposed distance: for Polybius, Livy, and Plutarch, place the ships so near the walls, that the people on board them were capable of annoying the besieged with darts
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and other missive weapons tipped with iron; and Polybius goes so far as to say, that with ladders resting on the ships, the Romans could pass from them to the walls; and if this was the fact, there was no necessity to have recourse to a burning-glass of so large a size, that it was next to impossible to have made, in order to set fire to the ships. Thus it appears to me, that we may safely deny the fact in opposition to the generality of the historians; and affirm the possibility, in opposition to the common opinion of the mathematicians. *Vid. Buffon.*

LXII. It is said of a celebrated mathematician named Proclus, who lived in the reign of the emperor Anastasius, that he did the same with Archimedes, that is, with burning-glasses, set fire to the ships with which count Vitalianus besieged Constantinople. The silence of all the authors with respect to this matter, who were prior to Zonaras, and who gave accounts of the war between Anastasius and Vitalianus, is an argument against the probability of it; for neither Evagrius the scholiast, who lived in the same century that war happened, which was the sixth, nor count Marcelinus, who flourished in the seventh, nor Cedrenus, who wrote in the eleventh, speak a word of Proclus or his burning-glasses. Zonaras, who lived in the twelfth, is the first who
gives

gives any relation of them, though he does not positively affirm the truth of it, but only tells us the story with an *it is so said*, or reported. I add to this, that count Marcelinus informs us count Vitalianus did not raise the siege of Constantinople because his fleet was destroyed, but because the emperor Anastasius solicited and procured the raising the siege, by means of a large sum of money, and other magnificent presents which he sent to count Vitalianus.

LXIV. I recollect also, that in a work called The Theatre of Human Life, we find Evagrius, and Paul the Deacon, quoted in favour of the story of the burning-glasses of Proclus; but neither in one or other of these authors is there the least mention of such glasses; from whence we may infer that these great compilations are exposed to great mistakes.

S E C T. XXVIII.

Communication of the Red Seas with the Mediterranean.

LXV. We read in various histories, that some princes endeavoured to make a communication between the Red Sea and the Mediterranean, by means

means of a cut from the Red Sea to the Nile ; but that, in the execution of the work, they met with such difficulties that were next to insuperable ; the principal of which was the apprehension that the Red Sea being much higher than the Nile, its waters would inundate Egypt. In the Royal Academy of Sciences at Paris, in the year 1702, when they were examining the geographical map which Monsieur Boutier had made of Egypt, they examined this point also, and found that such an apprehension was chimerical : they push'd their enquiries further, and discovered, upon reading some antient historians, that there was great reason to conclude, that in the very remote ages there had been such a canal of communication.

S E C T. XXIX.

Pharamond, the Salique Law, and Twelve Peers of France.

LXVI. We have said before, that Charles Sorrel doubted the existence of Pharamond, whom the French consider as their first king. Mons. du Haillan does not go quite so great a length as this, but denies positively that that prince ever passed to the Gallic side of the Rhine. He denies likewise he instituted the Salique law ; and holds

holds as fabulous also the story of Charles the Great having been the institutor of the twelve peers of France.

S E C T. XXX.

The Sacred Oil of Rheims, and the French Fleurs de Lis.

LXIV. The fact of the singular glory resulting to the French monarchy and its kings on account at the coronation of Clodovicus, the oil with which he was consecrated, together with the fleurs de lis, having descended from Heaven, the first brought by a dove, and the second by an angel; I say the certainty of this fact is not so firmly established among the French themselves, as that some of their own authors do not entertain a doubt of it; because when they tell the story, they make use of the expressions, it is so said, it is so reported, and it is believed, &c. The silence of St. Gregory of Turene upon this head, who wrote so extensively upon miracles, and of whom some have remarked, that he was exceedingly credulous, is, with many people, a convincing proof that there never was such a prodigy. The silence of Paulus Emilius also on the matter, who was a noble and general historian of the affairs of France, is an argument, that he looked upon the story as fa-
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bulous; because if he had thought it probable, he would surely not have omitted to mention it.

S E C T. XXXI.

Origin of Salutation upon Sneezing.

LXVIII. Some fix the custom of saluting and praying for a blessing on those who sneeze, to have commenced in the reign of St. Gregory, in whose time Rome was visited with a melancholy pestilence, of which a sneeze was the fatal crisis, as immediately after that the patient died; and that the holy pontif ordained, that this salutation and blessing should be established as a remedy to avert the evil; and from thence this benediction and praying for the preservation of any one who sneezed came to be in use ever afterwards. This tradition, although generally received, is evidently fabulous. We are told by Aristotle, that in his time it was the common practice to bless people when they sneezed. In his Problems, sect. xxxiii. quæst. 7. and 9. he enquires into the cause of this custom, and accounts for it in the following manner: that sneezing is an indication that the head, which is the noblest and most sacred part of a man, is well disposed and in good order; on which account people reverence sneezing: *Perinde igitur, quasi bonæ indicium valetudinis*

dinis partis optimæ, atque sacerimæ, sternutamentum adorant beneque augurantur. This matter was treated of in the Academy Royal of Inscriptions, where they produced testimonies, that not only among the Greeks and Romans this was a common practice, but that the Spaniards upon their first discovery of the New World, found it established there also. Mons. Morin, a Member of that Academy, tells us, that the common tradition which at present prevails, with respect to the origin of these salutations, was produced by another fabulous tradition of much greater antiquity. This was that of the Rabbins, quoted in the Talmudic Lexicon of Buxtorf; which says, that God, at the beginning of the world, established it as a general law, that men should never sneeze more than once, and that immediately after it they should die; that things went uniformly on in this way, without varying in a single instance, till the days of the patriarch Jacob; who, in a second struggle he had with God, obtained the revocation of this law; and that all the princes of the world, upon being informed of this event, ordained, that their subjects in future, should accompany the act of sneezing with words of thanksgiving and prayers for health. Our tradition bears such an analogy to the rabbinical one, that although it is not quite so extravagant, it seems probable, that the first fable begat the second.

S E C T. XXXII.

Queen Brunequilda.

LXIX. Queen Brunequilda of France is execrated by nearly all sorts of authors as the worst woman the world ever knew. The wickednesses they attribute to her are innumerable and enormous; an unbridled lust, which attended her from her early youth till she attained the age of seventy-one; a furious ambition, to which she sacrificed all obligations, both human and divine; an outrageous cruelty, which sacrificed as victims to her resentment or ambition infinite numbers of innocent people, by poison or the dagger, and among them some of royal race. Who could imagine that any one would venture to stand up in defence of a woman, the relation of whose conduct has stained the page of all histories, which speak of her, with blood? Notwithstanding this, there appears an evidence on her behalf, whose testimony, if you give it the credit his merit and character intitle him to, will avert the force of the accusation, and cause it to vanish in smoke. This is the great Gregory, who, in two letters he wrote to that queen, covers her with eulogiums, and goes so far in one of them, as to congratulate the French nation upon the happiness of being governed by a queen,

queen, who was an illustrious pattern of all kinds of virtues: *Præ aliis gentibus gentem Francorum asserimus felicem, quæ sic bonis omnibus præditam meruit habere reginam.* (lib. 1. epist. 8.) It is proper to observe, that the date of these letters, is posterior some years to the perpetration of most of the iniquities with which Brunequilda is charged.

S E C T. XXXIII.

Mahomet.

LXX. It is so currently asserted by all our writers, that the false prophet Mahomet was of low extraction, that the truth of it has come to be believed in all Christian countries, as an historical dogma. But the Arabic authors unanimously agree, that he was descended from the Corasinan family, which was one of the most noble and ancient of Mecca. It is true, that these may be mistaken ; but then they are the only people who could know any thing of the matter.

LXXI. On the other hand, Ludovicus Maraccius, an author of eminence, and one who was most learned in Mahometan affairs, in the Prologue to his Prodomus, or refutation of the Alcoran, sufficiently gives us to understand,

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that in our histories, there are many fables respecting that remarkable Imposture: he says, that the Mahometans laugh at the stories which some of our historians relate of Mahomet; and this judicious author adds, that this serves to confirm, and make them stiff in their erroneous belief. I have no doubt but it has this effect, because it is natural to suppose it would beget an aversion in them towards Christians, and a distrust of all they affirm, even with regard to things appertaining to their own dogmas. Therefore those who think they do any service to religion, by relating all the ill things they can pick up of the enemies to it, without a sufficient examination into the truth of them, and especially of the chiefs or leaders of sects, are so far from accomplishing the end they wish to obtain, that thereby they do the cause they mean to serve a notable injury. What purpose, for example, would it answer, to tell a Lutheran, that the leader of his sect was the son of a devil incubate? it would answer no other, than that of irritating and persuading him of the truth of what his doctors had told him, viz. that we invent all kinds of fictions, which may conduce to serve the cause we defend. The same may be said of the sin of Sodomy imputed to John Calvin, if the accusation is not just, which is a point that I am sure I cannot determine; and likewise of all other

other imputations of this sort. I am very clear, that we should expose all the immoral practices of the founders of false religions, that would tend to render them infamous, provided we can maintain the truth of the allegations we bring against them; and many charges of this sort might be brought against some of them that could be supported, and especially against Luther. But in cases where nothing can be clearly made out, let us not mix the certain with the uncertain; and above all, let us avoid introducing the false.

LXXII. But to return to Mahomet, not only with regard to his birth, but even with respect to those circumstances of his life, which have no connection with, or tendency to clearing up the truth or falsehood of his doctrines, the European and Arabic authors are totally opposite in their accounts of him; and to such a degree do they differ, that Ludovicus Maraccius says, that both one and the other of them, when they are speaking of the same Mahomet, seem as if they were describing two distinct men. There is nothing more firmly established and more generally assented to among us, than that the monk Nestorianus Sergius was his tutor and principal counsellor; but, notwithstanding this, Maraccius thinks, that it was much more likely his master and direc-

tor was some Jew: the probability of which conjecture, he founds in the many Talmudical and Rabbinical fables with which the Alcoran abounds. Neither is there any certainty in what is said of the tame dove, which was used to put its beak into his ear, and which he pretended was the archangel Gabriel. The history of Mahomet, as given us by Maraccius, the materials for writing which, he affirms, was extracted from the most chosen Arabian authors, sets forth, that the apparitions of the archangel Gabriel to Mahomet, were very frequent; but that he did not come in the shape of a dove, nor in any other form that was perceptible to other people; nor could the apparition be discerned by his wife Cadighe, although she had been often present with him, at the times in which he professed to have seen it. I also know, that Edward Pocock, a writer of great veracity, says, that he never met with the story of the dove in any Arabian author.

LXXIII. We have one, or rather two other fables to refute, with respect to Mahomet, that both relate to the place of his interment. The first says, that he was buried at Mecca; but this is an error, which is not accepted at present by any but the lowest of the vulgar; for it is generally known by other people, that he was
interred

interred at Medina, a city of Arabia Felix, distant from Mecca four days journey. The perigrinations of the Mahometans to Mecca, are made on account of their prophet having been born there, and also out of a regard they profess to have for a house in that city, which they say was built by Adam; and after the deluge, was rebuilt and inhabited by Abraham. The second fable, which may be termed a common error, is that of the body being suspended in the air in an iron chest, which is held up, and kept in equilibrio, by the magnetic power of some load-stones placed in the roof of the chapel where it remains. Edward Pocock says, the Mahometans are ready to burst their sides with laughter, when they hear any of us say these tales are firmly credited in the Mahometan countries. The truth is, that it is well known, from the testimony of many credible people who have been in those countries, that there is no such suspension of the body of Mahomet in the air; nor, according to good natural philosophy, is it possible that there should be any such thing; for the magnetic virtue being liable to alterations, the attractive power of the load-stones could not always continue to act with the same force, or in the same proportion; in consequence of which, the equilibrium could not be preserved. Father Cabeus tells us, that with a
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great deal of labour and difficulty, he accomplished the suspension of a needle between two load-stones, but that the suspension did not continue longer than the time in which you could repeat four hexameter verses, and that then it adhered to one of the load-stones. For this reason, we ought to esteem as fabulous, what some authors relate of an Image of the Sun, which was made of iron, and which remained suspended by load-stones in the Temple of Serapis at Alexandria.

S E C T. XXXIV.

Kings of France, of the Merovingian Line.

LXXV. The cause of the translation of the Crown of France, from the Merovingian to the Carolingian line, was, for a long time, and without the least contradiction, believed to have proceeded from the incapacity of the princes of the first race to govern; and this was the motive assigned by various authors and chronologers for the transaction; but it having been afterwards found out, that they all copied this story from Eginardus, who was antecedent to these writers; and it having been also discovered that there was reason for suspecting the authority of Eginardus in this respect, and that it was probable

bable he was warped by motives of favour and partiality; people began to doubt, and these doubts were succeeded by an absolute denial, in some of the most eminent modern French authors, of the truth of what he had asserted. Eginardus was secretary of state to, and a great favourite with Charles the Fifth; and it was the interest of this prince, that it should not seem as if the Crown, which devolved to him as heir to his father Pepin, was an usurpation, in which light the thing must have appeared, provided Childeric had been unjustly deposed; and, besides the disgrace of his father's having committed an act of perfidy, he would have remained without a legitimate title to the crown; for there was no other mode of putting an honest face upon the coronation of Pepin, but that of declaring Childeric and all the princes of his race incapable of reigning.

LXVI. Eginardus then, as a minister in whom Charles placed the greatest confidence, could not divest himself of being partial to the interests of his master; nor could he avoid, on this account, drawing upon him the suspicion of his having been biased by motives of prejudice in his favour. We may add to this, that in his narrative of the transaction, he has mixed some false and incredible circumstances. He says,
that

that Childeric was deposed, and Pepin crowned, by the authority and direction of Pope Estaphanus the Third ; which could not possibly be, for the election of this pope was either some days posterior to the coronation of Pepin, or happened within a day or two of that era. For this reason, others, in order to vindicate the coronation, without violating chronology, bring the authority of pope Zacharias to justify it, who was the immediate predecessor of Estephanus. What Eginardus tells us of the state of indolence and abasement in which the kings of the Merovingian line lived, is totally incredible. He relates, that they used to appear in public, and take their journies in a cart or waggon, drawn by oxen, which was driven by a person who was habited like, and had in all respects the appearance of a common carter ; but who can believe such an extravagance ? He says further, that they were allowed no other income to subsist on than the rent of a small farm ; and that all the rest was disposed of according to the will and pleasure of the steward and other officers of the household. But how can this be reconciled, or rendered compatible with the building of various monasteries, which were erected and endowed by the kings of the Merovingian line, and with the grand donations which were made by them to many others ?

S E C T.

S E C T. XXXV.

The Tragedy of Belisarius.

LXXVII. We find the tragedy of Belisarius set forth in an infinite number of books, as one of the strongest instances that ever appeared on the theatre of the world, of the inconstancy and instability of fortune. It is asserted, that the emperor Justinian, after that great captain had been crowned with so many laurels, having discovered that he had been an accomplice in a conspiracy against him, caused his eyes to be put out, and reduced him to so low a state of misery, that he passed the remainder of his life by being obliged for subsistence to beg alms about the streets, and at the doors of churches.

LXXVIII. We find also this story is contradicted by Cedrenus, and other grave authors; but what most effectually makes against it, is the silence of Procopius upon the [subject, who was the author of the Secret History, which is a virulent satyr upon the emperor Justinian, and the empress Theodora. This writer, who resided in Constantinople in the reign of Justinian, and who out-lived him, could not be a stranger to the tragedy of Belisarius, if there had been any truth

truth in it ; nor is it credible that, in his Secret History, he should conceal an event of such magnitude, and especially when he could have made it conducive to the principal object of his book, which was that of exposing and aggravating all the faults of Justinian ; who could not be looked upon as excusable, for having behaved with cruelty to a man to whom he owed so many obligations, even if Belisarius had ever been culpable ; for scarce any other prince, had ever been more indebted to a subject, than Justinian was to him ; besides this, it might have been very easy for Procopius, by doubting or lessening the crime, to have made the punishment of Belisarius appear as an act of absolute cruelty in Justinian.

LXXIX. In support of the common opinion, it is said, there is still a tower at Constantinople, which is called the Tower of Belisarius, and is supposed to have taken the name from that great man having been confined in it. This is but a slender argument wherewith to support the probability of such a tragedy, for this name might have been given to it from some other particular respecting Belisarius ; or it is not impossible, that he might have been imprisoned in it for a short space of time ; for it is a fact, that before the second expedition of Belisarius into Italy, he had fallen off in the good graces of the emperor, through the intrigues

trigues of the empress Theodora: and he might then have been imprisoned in the tower for a few days; and Procopius, who informs us of this small disgrace of Belisarius, would not have concealed the great misfortune which is said to have befallen him, had the circumstances of it been true.

S E C T. XXXVI.

The Maid of Orleans.

LXXX. The famous Joan d'Arc, commonly called the Maid of Orleans, makes a great figure in the history of France as a celestial heroine, to whom that kingdom confessedly, in the reign of Henry the Sixth of England, owed its restoration, and being preserved from the total destruction, which was nearly brought on it by the success of the English arms.

LXXXI. The history of this wonderful damsel, reduced to a compendium, is as follows: The French nation, and above all their king, finding themselves dejected and dispirited by the repeated defeats they had suffered; and also without the necessary resolution, to concert and determine upon measures for opposing and averting the new dangers with which they were threatened by the
siege

siege of Orleans, that was pushed on by the English with great vigour : I say, at this crisis, a poor Shepherdess, that is, Joan d'Arc, at the age of about eighteen or twenty years, who was born in a little village on the Maze, felt in herself an occult inspiration, or express commission from God, to succour Orleans, and cause Charles the Fifth to be consecrated and anointed king at Rheims ; and, in order to execute this commission, after having first opened herself to a nobleman of the kingdom, she was introduced to the king, whom she knew the instant she saw him, although she had never set eyes on him before, and he, to prevent her discovering him, had mixed with the croud in a common dress. They put many questions to her, to which she gave excellent and satisfactory answers ; and informed them of some things, which they thought were impossible to be known to her but by revelation. Finally, upon the strength of these proofs, they confided to her conduct the relief of the city of Orleans, in which enterprize, the French, animated and led on by her, obliged the English to raise the siege, and, in consequence of her influence and example, gained afterwards many considerable advantages over them. She removed the obstructions that were in her way, and conducted the king to Rheims, where the ceremony of his consecration was performed and completed.

pleated: but being afterwards taken prisoner by the English, they carried her to Roan, where they iniquitously accused her of sorcery, tried her in the ordinary form, and condemned her to be burnt for a witch.

LXXXII. I gave some account of this extraordinary woman in the Sixteenth Discourse of my first volume, where I hinted it merely as a conjecture of my own, that, in all probability, the divine impulse the French attributed to her, and still persist in attributing, and the witchcraft imputed to her by the English, were both equally false. But now I find my conjecture is supported and confirmed by a celebrated historian, in consequence of which, what I advanced as a supposition, wears the face of an authentic information. This historian, is Monsieur Du Haillan, who affirms, that all the feats of Joan d'Arc, which have been so much admired, were the effects of political artifice; without the least intervention, either of divine inspiration or diabolical compact. According to this author, three French noblemen, whom he names, were the contrivers and managers of the whole business. These (after disclosing to her the most private secrets of the court, and instructing her largely in all she had to do and say, in order to make it appear as if she knew

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things by divine inspiration; and that all her actions were effected by divine impulse) made use of her, thus instructed, as the most effectual means to animate the dejected king and his dispirited troops. He adds, that some people affirmed, that although they called her a maid, she was no such thing, but the concubine of one of the three lords; but whether this was so or not, I presume, they pitched upon her preferable to any other woman, from having observed her to be endowed with an excellent capacity, a clear and penetrating head, and a heart proportioned to the dangers of so great an undertaking. Gabriel Naudé, in his book intitled *Strokes of Policy*, adopts the sentiment of Du Haillan, and quotes Justus Lipsius, and Monsieur Langei, as being of the same opinion; and adds, that other authors, both French and strangers, adopt it. By this development, the famous Joan d'Arc is divested of any pretensions to being miraculously inspired, but not degraded from the rank of a heroine.

SECT.

S E C T. XXXVII.

Prefter John.

It is wonderful, considering how slight our information is of Prefter John of India, that even children and rustics are acquainted with his name, although it is not as yet known with any certainty, who this prince is, where he reigns, nor why he is called by this name. When the Portuguese received the first information that the king of the Abyssinians professed himself a Christian, and that his subjects called him Belul Gian, or as others have it, John Coi; they imagined this was Prefter John, and their sentiment was adopted, and passed current in all Europe. When afterwards people came to know, that these words in the Abyssinian language, had a different signification from what had been put upon them, and meant the same as *precious king*, or *my king*; and reflecting also, that those who gave the first accounts of Prefter John, placed him in Asia, and not in Africa, this opinion began to lose ground with men of letters, and to be considered as erroneous. But the doubts respecting who this Christian prince is, in what part of Asia he reigns, and why he is called Prefter John, still

remain: and with regard to this matter, there are so many opinions, that the enumeration of them would be tedious; but in one thing they all agree, which is, that this prince is of the Nestorian sect; although in other points relating to him they differ widely: some say his empire was extinguished by the Tartars; others, that the name of Prester John was given to the Great Mogul, on account of his assuming the title of *Schah Gehan*, which signifies *king of the world*; and that, by equivocal and forced interpretation, Schah Gehan was construed into Prester John. Such a variety of opinions, has raised in me some suspicion, whether all that has been related of this Christian king of Asia, is not entirely fabulous. If, upon inquiry, it shall appear that Paulus Venetus was the first who gave an account of him, and that all other authors have taken what they said upon the subject solely from him: I say, if this should appear to be the case, it will afford a new motive of distrust, and it would be laughable enough, to find that authors have been beating their brains, and scrutinizing all the corners of the globe in search of Prester John, when no such man exists, nor ever did exist in the world; at least, it is not probable, that he exists at present, because in all the modern voyages and travels that I have seen, I don't meet with the least mention
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of him; and if there really was such a man, authors in that way, would not have thought him unworthy of their notice.

S E C T. XXXVIII.

Pope Alexander the Sixth.

LXXXIV. The memory of our countryman, Pope Alexander the Sixth, is so blackened in story, that the characters in which his history is written, seem to be all contaminated with blots; nor do I undertake, or think any one else, with a probability of success can undertake, his justification or defence, or pretend to clear him of all the crimes which are imputed to him; but may we not suppose, that the hatred of his enemies augmented the catalogue of his faults? It is certain, that Alexander was much abhorred by the Romans, partly from his own misconduct, and partly from that of his son, the outrageous Cæsar Borgia. I firmly believe, that the vulgar rumour never charged any prince with more faults than he was not guilty of, than Alexander; and if the writers of the time were infected with the prejudices of the populace, they would not be scrupulous of inserting the rumours of the vulgar in their histories.

LXXXV. Let us pass from this reflection (which is equally applicable to all other princes who are abhorred by their subjects, as to Alexander) to a particular fact, which, without doubt, is one of the most conspicuous and notorious that is imputed to this prince. It is asserted, that he conspired with his son Cæsar Borgia, to take away by poison, the lives of several cardinals, one of whom was Adrian Cortus, a man who was entirely devoted to him; and that their motive for perpetrating this wickedness, was that of seizing on the riches of the devoted persons: that for the purpose of executing the scheme, the intended victims were invited to a grand entertainment, which was to be given by the pope, at the country-house of Cardinal Cornetus; where a portion of cool poisoned wine was provided, to be served to the persons devoted to death; but by mistake, it was given to the pope and his son; that the son, by the help of a robust constitution, and speedy remedies prescribed by the physicians, escaped; but the pope, who being advanced in years, was unable to resist the shock, resigned his life to the power of the poison.

LXXXVI. This cruel attempt, and the fatal result of it, may I believe, be disputed upon grounds

grounds of great probability. Some, who affirm the fact, doubt the pope's having had any hand in the business, and lay the crime wholly at the door of Cæsar Borgia. Alexander Natalis, who is one of the most severe writers against that pontiff, confesses, that there are some who maintain the whole relation to have been fabulous; and adds, that there are manuscript diaries existing, which testify he died upon the seventh day of a continual fever; which is a regular and ordinary disease: and let the truth prevail, why are we not to believe these diaries, which are written originally at the same place, and at the same time when the event happened? What writings can be more deserving of credit than these Diaries? or who, living in Rome at the time of Alexander's death, would dare to assert in writing, that he died a natural death at the end of seven days after being attacked with a continual fever, if the fact had been otherwise, and especially if all Rome had it in their power to convict him of the falshood? It may be alledged, that the poison was of such a nature as might excite a fever to occasion his death: but experience shews us, that the operation of poisons, is always, or nearly always, attended with uncommon and extraordinary symptoms. Besides, the enemies of Alexander, who were very numerous, had a great propensity to invent and believe every thing that

could tend to blacken him, or blast his fame. John Francisco Pico, in the life of a certain religious which he wrote, who was a friend of his, tells us, that there were two opinions which prevailed concerning the death of Alexander: one was, that he died by poison; and the other, that he was suffocated by the Devil, with whom he had made a compact to deliver his soul to him at a stated time, provided he would make him pope. May we not infer from this, that there is no extravagance or chimera which envy is not capable of inventing, in order to render a man infamous: and it is worthy of remark, that those two opinions, with regard to the certainty of them, destroy one another: I mean, that if you could suppose the Devil suffocated him, it would overturn the certainty of his having lost his life by poison. But how, when there is a failure in establishing the certainty of the fact, can you believe a man to have been guilty of so atrocious an action? Is it not doing a serious injury to your neighbour, to suppose him guilty of a heavy crime, upon the strength of uncertain assertions? what ought we to conclude in such a case, but that the crime was invented by the hatred of some, and that it gained credit from a principle of hatred in others?

S E C T.

S E C T. XXXIX.

Henry the Eighth and Anna Bolene.

LXXXVII. The same that befel Alexander the Sixth, and just in the same way, happened to Henry the Eighth of England, and his wife, or rather concubine, Anna Bolene. Both these personages were guilty of great crimes, and the dishonesty of Anna Bolene, was as notorious as the incontinence of Henry. The king, hurried away by a criminal passion for that lady, in order to possess her, repudiated unjustly his virtuous queen Catherine; and Ann was not only an accomplice in the unjust divorce, but was afterwards proved guilty of adultery. This was sufficient with respect to their incontinence, to render their fame odious to posterity. But Nicholas Saunders, urged by his indiscreet zeal, being desirous of heightening to the utmost the turpitude of them both, confounded the certain with the incredible; from whence it followed, that many of the vulgar among the Catholics, believed the incredible as certain facts.

LXXXVIII. Saunders says, that the love of Henry for Ann was not only illicit, but most enor-

enormously incestuous; because, that long before he knew her, he had had criminal conversation, not only with her mother, but also with a sister of her's, named Mary. He adds, that Anna Bolene, according to the testimony of her own mother, was the daughter of the said Henry. To strengthen the foregoing assertion, he says, this unhappy woman, was born two years after Thomas Bolene the husband of her mother, had been absent from his wife at the court of France, whither he had been sent on an embassy by Henry: that, upon his return to England, he was desirous of repudiating his wife, but the king interposed to prevent it; and the adulteress confessed to her husband, that the child he found in his house was the daughter of the king. According to this relation, the correspondence between Henry the Eighth and Anna Bolene, was shocking and incestuous in three particulars.

LXXXIX. With regard to Anna Bolene herself, he represents her, from her tender youth, to have been an infamous prostitute; for, he says, that at fifteen years of age, she surrendered her person, to the embraces of two of the domestics in her father's house; that soon afterwards she went to France, where her prostitution was so public and

and scandalous, that they called her by the opprobrious name of the English Mare: that, after a while, she introduced herself into the palace of Francis the First, who was then king of France, and that this prince, was universally known to have made use of the English prostitute, for the gratification of his lewd inclinations: that upon her return to England, she was admitted as a domestic into the household of Henry, where he fell violently enamoured with her; but his solicitations to obtain her as a mistress, proved abortive; for Anna, feigning herself to be a most virtuous person, made her pretensions to modesty subservient to her views of ambition; and always replied resolutely to the king's intreaties, that no man but her husband should have the dominion of her virginity; and upon this, the unhappy Henry, blinded by his passion, solicited and obtained a divorce from his queen Catherine, to enable him to marry Ann.

XC. There is nothing in this whole relation, which does not appear either very difficult to be credited, or absolutely chimerical. The triple incest of Henry, is so much out of the common course, and so horrible, that nothing can excite our belief of it, but proofs which are clearer than

than the sun at noon-day. That the gallantries of the king of France with Anna Bolene, which were so public and notorious, should not have come to the knowledge of Henry, is by no means credible; for irregularities of this sort, committed by princes, are generally well known at their own courts, and are soon communicated to those of other countries, and especially, when they are so near together as those of London and Paris. Neither is it credible that Henry, after he came to know that Ann had deceived him with respect to her being a maid, and when he had gratified the first cravings of his appetite, should not take a disgust to, or, at least, put her away from him: Henry, I say, who was so delicate in these matters, that he repudiated his fourth wife Ann of Cleves, for no other reason than his coming to understand, that before she espoused him, she had been under an engagement to marry another person. According to the chronology of the English History, this relation is not only improbable, but even impossible; because this tells us, that Anna Bolene was born in 1507; and Henry the Eighth was crowned in 1509; that in 1514 Anna went to France in the suite of queen Claudia, who was the sister of Henry, and wife of Francis the First; that Thomas Bolene did not go ambassador to France till the year 1515; and

and that the return of Anna Bolene to London, is placed between the years 1525 and 1527. From this account, there results two manifest contradictions to Saunders's relation: the first is, that Anna Bolene, could not at the age of fifteen, and before her going to France, have been guilty of the turpitudes which he charges her to have committed with her father's domestics; because, before she was eight years old she went to France, and did not return till she had attained the age of eighteen or twenty: the second is, that Anna Bolene was born, not only before Thomas Bolene went ambaffador to France, but before he could have possibly been the Ambaffador of Henry the Eighth; for Henry was not crowned till the year 1509, and Anna Bolene was born two years before. Finally, not only the English chronology, but Alexander Natalis, in the eighth volume of his Ecclesiastical History, and Father Orleans, in the second volume of his Revolutions of England, together with various Catholic authors, dissent from the account given by Saunders.

S E C T. XL.

Marechal d'Ancre.

XCI. It has so happened, that the tracts of history inserted in this discourse, are mostly favourable to, or in mitigation of the offences of some famous delinquents. There has scarce been a favourite since the days of Sejanus to our times, who was so universally detested, and, according to the process that was instituted against him, with so much reason, as the Marechal d'Ancre; who was a Florentine by birth, named Concino Concini, and who came to France with queen Mary of Medicis, by whose favour, during her regency, he was raised to the first offices in the state, and arrived at having the absolute controul of the whole monarchy. His insolence, his ambition, his cruelty, and his avarice, occasioned it to be resolved upon, as soon as Lewis the Thirteenth ascended the throne, to take away his life; but as on account of his creatures, and his great power, they did not dare attempt the thing by a regular process, they gave a commission to one Vitri, who was a captain in the guards, to put him to death in any manner that he should find most

most expedient; which he executed, by pistoling him upon the Pont Neuf, where he happened to meet him, unprepared or provided for his defence. The fury of the populace, manifested the implacable and inveterate hatred, which was entertained against the defunct favourite: they tumultuously dragged his body from the church, and hung it upon a gallows, which the Marechal had erected to hang those on who should murmur against him; they next beheaded him, and dragged the body through the streets and squares of the city; after this, they cut pieces off from it, with an intent to preserve them as precious mementos of the public vengeance. It is said, the ears were sold at a very high price. The grand provost, attended by his archers, attempted to restrain the populace, but was obliged to desist, as they threatened, if he did not remain quiet, to bury him alive. They threw the entrails into the river, and burnt part of the body before the statue of Henry the Fourth, which stands on the Pont Neuf; and some cut pieces of flesh, which they broiled at the fire they had made, and ate them: one manifested his rage, by tearing out and publicly eating the heart; and another, who by his dress appeared to be a man of condition, running his hand into the carcase, and drawing it out all besmeared

smear'd with blood, lifted it to his mouth and sucked it ; and scarce ever was the hatred of any people carried to such a pitch of fury. After he was dead, they instituted that prosecution against him which they did not dare to commence while he was living ; and upon the depositions and evidence which were laid before his judges, they not only declared him guilty of high treason, but of having professed Judaism, and been in league with the Devil ; and a little while afterwards, they beheaded and burnt his wife Leonora Gallagai, for the same crimes.

XCII. With all this, there has not been wanting a person, who has attempted to excuse and justify the Marechal d'Ancre, and not one who was a creature or countryman of his, or in any shape connected with him, but a Frenchman, a peer, and Marechal of France, Francis Annibal Duke d'Etr  , a man famous for his military exploits and his embassies, and one who was very well informed with respect to the intrigues and secret management of those times. This nobleman, in his Memoirs of the Regency of Mary of Medicis, attributes the tragedy of the Marechal d'Ancre to mere misfortune ; he celebrates his great talents, and says, that he was naturally disposed to do what was right, and that, therefore,
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very few people who knew him disliked him; but he acknowledges, that although he was a pleasing man in conversation, he entertained high and ambitious notions; but adds, that he concealed them profoundly; and he concludes with saying, that he had heard him declare many times, they murdered the king without his order or knowledge.

XC. These contradictions in history are truly astonishing. The Marechal d'Etré is an evidence superior to all exception; for if he could ever have had any obligations to d'Ancre, they must have been but trifling, because he obtained his most distinguished honours, and such as were very correspondent to his merit, in the reign of Lewis the Thirteenth. What then shall we say to all this? why, under such circumstances, good criticism will pursue a middle course; and conclude, that d'Ancre incurred the public hatred, partly on account of his being so great a favourite, which of itself is sufficient to make a man regarded with an evil eye; and partly on account of his being a stranger, which is a circumstance that nearly always produces, in those who are to obey, envy and indignation: and finally, the abuse of his power, in some instances of his conduct, may also have contributed to raise the

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flame. But the most atrocious crimes alledged against him in his prosecution, we may suppose, were the invention of his enemies; for, notwithstanding the evidence upon record seems to confirm the truth of them, we may conclude, that out of so great a number as these consisted of, and who were for the most part enraged witnesses, there would not be wanting some of them, who would give such testimony as their rage dictated to them, although it was contrary to truth, and against their consciences.

S E C T. XLI.

Urban Grenadier, and the Nuns of Loudun.

XVIII. Francis Urban Grenadier, canon of Loudun, in the province of Poictou, is the last person we shall enumerate in this catalogue; his tragedy has been, and still is, much animadverted upon, both within France and without it. This man, who was endued with talents above mediocrity, was genteel in his person, sufficiently learned, and an eloquent orator; but a lover of, and beloved by the other sex, to a degree bordering upon excess. Either his talents or his vices, or both together, raised him many enemies, but their animosity was most probably directed against the first;

first; for the world is more apt to attack people out of envy to their good qualities, than from motives of morality, or from being disgusted at their vices. It happened, that all the nuns of a convent at Loudun seemed affected in a strange way, which was imputed by many to their being bewitched. What reason the enemies of Grenadier had, or pretended to have, for attributing this mischief to him, I can't imagine; but they gave information of this matter to Cardinal Richlieu, who was at that time, under colour of being minister, the king *de facto* of France; to this man of power, they accused Grenadier of being the author of the possession of these nuns. The cardinal had more than one motive to wish the ruin of Grenadier; for when he was no more than Bishop of Louzon, there had been a sharp dispute between them; but what irritated him most against Grenadier, was an information which those who accused him of the crime of sorcery gave the cardinal, that Grenadier was the author of a satyr intitled *Le Cordonier de Loudun*, which was very severe upon his person, birth, and pedigree. The cardinal ordered that an enquiry should immediately be made respecting the possession of the nuns, and the sorcery of Grenadier; in which he directed, they should be careful to observe the colour and appearance of strict justice. Twelve

ecclesiastics were appointed judges in the cause; who, after a formal and seemingly minute enquiry, condemned him to be burnt alive; which sentence was afterwards executed upon him, and he, at the terrible crisis of his suffering, shewed great Christian patience and fortitude.

XCIV. But notwithstanding all the judicial solemnity of the process, many people doubted of the justice of the sentence, and attributed the whole proceeding to political artifice, assisted by the delusion of some, and the credulity of others. The cardinal, who from aloft directed the movements of the machines, although he was allowed to be a man of great abilities, was generally known to be furiously vindictive. He neither wanted capacity nor power, to crush the most spotless innocence under the colour and shew of justice. The judges are said to have been good men, but very credulous, and people of little penetration, who were on this account pitched upon by the enemies of Grenadier. The rigour of the sentence shews, that some other motive intervened to produce it besides the love of justice; and what above all manifested such a motive, was the cruel oppression that was practised on him, in obliging him to make use of a particular confessor, notwithstanding he alledged that he disliked him,

him, for that he was his enemy, and had been one of the principal instruments in working his ruin. He intreated, that for the expiation of his sins, they would permit him to have Father Guardian of the society of Franciscans at Loudun, who was a learned man, and a divine of the Sorbone; but it was not possible for him, either to obtain this grace, or a permission to have any other man but him whom he had objected to as his enemy. It is also said, that the witnesses who deposed against Grenadier, were the very Devils who tormented the nuns; and the testimony of such men, by all laws, divine and human, is unworthy to be admitted. Many observations were written and sent to the press upon the possession of the nuns, with a view of evincing, that it was all delusion and a made-up tale. The Devils at first, answered in French, to the questions that were asked them in Latin; afterwards, when they were desirous of speaking a little Latin, they made many false concords, which caused some wags in France to remark, that the Devils of Loudun were but novices in grammar, who had not yet advanced to the third form. There were two men of ability, who offered to demonstrate the delusion and imposture of the possession of the nuns; but they were so severely threatened by the cardinal, that one of them fled

to Rome, and the other was obliged to conceal himself. The exorcists were sent from Paris by the cardinal; which circumstance, joined to the great pains that were taken to persuade the truth of the possession, sufficiently demonstrates the complexion of the business. Finally, in consideration of the circumstances we have recited, and others which we have omitted to mention, many authors within France itself, and among them Egidius Menagius, and the most learned Naudæus, have taken the part of Grenadier, and there is scarce any one, who when he touches upon this matter, does not express himself with some doubt.

S E C T. XLII.

XCV. We have laid before the reader all these historical accounts, to let him see, that even to contradict the best-attested relations, and such as have generally been accepted and admitted as true upon the credit of a multitude of writers, and upon the authority of judicial acts, there are so many strong arguments to be alledged, that they excite in the understanding a propensity to doubt them, which doubting sometimes leads to a discovery of their falshood; and from hence we
may

may learn how difficult it is, not only to hit upon the certain, but even to point out what is most probable in history, although I do not, on this account, pretend to adopt absolute Pyrrhonism, or to claim a general suspension of assent to all that is related by historians. There is a large field for distrust, which, carried to a certain length, is discretion; and, to an extravagant one, folly. It is necessary to examine with great attention, the limits to which doubt may be extended, and to extricate yourself from the labyrinth of it, whenever it is in your power, either by the road of truth, or the path of probability.

What I mean to illustrate, is the great difficulties that are to be encountered in exercising worthily the occupation of an historian: to do it well, requires immense reading, a most happy memory, and a criticism that is extremely delicate. How can a man by reading one or two authors, pretend to investigate the truth of what is related by an infinite number? I don't pretend that it is absolutely necessary he should read them all; for this many times would be impossible; and with respect to those, who he knows did nothing more than copy from others, superfluous; but he should read all those who are of especial note, either on account of the time in which they lived, the

diligence with which they applied themselves, or on account of some other circumstances, which might contribute to their acquiring the most punctual information. It is not sufficient to read modern authors only, but you ought rather to proceed by retrospection; and, by beginning at the bottom, trace things upwards through the series of time, till you arrive at the fountains where the original writers drank, and from whom the others derived their intelligence. Neither is the reading antient authors sufficient, as it sometimes happens, that modern ones meet with monuments that were concealed from the others, which often serve to explain old events; and, upon the strength of which, they sometimes exhibit such solid arguments, as render difficult, or totally obstruct our assent to the account given of them by the ancients.

XCVII. Neither is it sufficient to read those authors who, from motives of partiality, would strive to make their relations correspond with their wishes. The rectitude of historic decision, requires that we should hear every one, even our enemies, and pronounce sentence, not according to our inclinations, but the strength and quality of the proofs.

XCVIII.

XCVIII. It conduces much, in order to investigate the truth of events related by authors, and is also in a manner necessary, to know the situation and circumstances of the authors themselves; because in these, we may find motives to give or deny them credit; such, as what country they were born in, what religion they professed, and what party they were attached to, whether they were under obligations to, or had cause to be dissatisfied with the persons they introduce in their histories, and whether they were the dependants or relations of any of them, &c.

XCIX. But, above all, it is necessary to find out the natural disposition of an author. There are some, who so strikingly display the character of men of truth and sincerity, that they command our belief of them, even when they speak in favour of the party they are attached to. In this elevated point of view, we may venture to place Philip de Comines, our Mariana, and Henry Catherinus. But to acquire this knowledge of authors, demands singular perspicuity; for, although it is generally said, that in the writings of authors we may read their genius and disposition, we should reflect, that these are much more easy to be disguised by the pen than with the tongue.

tongue. It is well known, that Sallust was a man of debauched morals; but notwithstanding this, there is scarce any other author, in whom we find such frequent declamations against vice.

C. The degree of reading and extent of historical information that is required, either to write or make a just judgment of any history, is very great. It is not only necessary to know exactly the religion, laws, and customs of the nations to which the events relate, in order to be clear whether they are repugnant to or correspondent with them; but it is also frequently necessary to know those of other nations, because it often happens, that the circumstances of one kingdom are blended with those of another, either by commerce, wars, or a thousand other accidental contingencies.

S E C T. XLIII.

CI. But what above all makes writing history a difficult task is, that, in order to be a historian, it is necessary for a man to be much more than a historian. This, which may appear a paradox, is not so, but a most true position: I mean, that a person can't be a perfect historian, who has not studied other faculties besides history; be-
 7 cause,

cause, in various instances, a knowledge of other faculties discovers the falsity of some historical relations. The understanding geography, for example, no one can deny to be exceedingly necessary. Polybius and Diodorus Siculus, were so diligent in this matter, that before they wrote their histories, they travelled over the kingdoms and countries to which they related. Now-a-days this labour is not necessary, because the numbers of geographical books and maps at present extant, although they are not minutely exact, are sufficiently correct to make this trouble needless.

CII. Besides, there is another circumstance, which perhaps as yet, has never been attended to, which is, that other faculties which are seemingly very foreign from history, often serve to throw lights on various occurrences. What faculty, for example, to appearance, can have less relation to history than astronomy? but Quintus Curtius, through his gross ignorance of this science, fell into an historical error. He says, that when Alexander was marching to India, his soldiers complained loudly, that he was leading them to a country where they should not be able to see the sun. They might have had reason for this complaint, if he had been marching them Northward, in consequence of which, they would have perceived the sun to get lower, and
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the days to shorten upon them ; but by marching towards the South, as they then were marching, they must observe the sun to get higher, and consequently, that fear in the soldiers could not have been possible,

CIII. Who would think of supposing, that optics and catoptrics, and we may say the same of other mathematical subjects, could be of use in writing a history ? But please to observe, that by understanding optics, you would know, what Valerius Maximus, and other authors, tell us of a man named Strabo, who, from the promontory of Lilibyum, saw and counted the ships that had just sailed out of the port of Carthage was impossible, because the image of every ship, which at such a distance, could be formed on the retina, must be so exceedingly minute as to have been imperceptible. Also by understanding catoptrics, would be known either the impossibility, or almost insurmountable difficulty of making the burning glasses, with which we are told Archimedes, at the siege of Syracuse, set fire to the ships of Marcellus ; that is, if we suppose the ships to have been as far distant from the walls as some authors have placed them, which was more than thirty geometrical paces.

CIV.

CIV. Finally, and to sum up the whole, as human events which are the object of history, may bear analogy to the objects of all sorts of faculties, there is not one of them, which by an historian's being acquainted with may not afford assistance in the discovery of the truth of some facts.

S E C T. XLIV.

CV. From all that has been said, it is evident, that he, who sets about writing a history, engages in a most arduous undertaking; and that this is an occupation, fit only for those, in whom are combined so many excellent qualities, that the possession of them all in one subject approaches nearly to an impossibility; for, to the universal knowledge which we have just hinted to be necessary, should be added a love of truth, which nothing can intimidate; a comprehensive spirit, which the multitude of species can't confound; a methodical genius to arrange them; a superior judgment, to class and estimate them according to their merit; a penetrating ingenuity, which, among a great number of confused and seemingly contradictory appearances, can discern the legitimate signs of the true from the adulterated; and, finally, he should be able to write in a clear and noble stile, such as we described in the beginning

ginning of this discourse as best suited to history, in order to illustrate and explain the whole. I say, find me a man possessed of all these requisites, *et eris mihi magnus Apollo.*

CVI. Although I consider all the before-named qualities, as absolutely necessary to form a compleat historian, I am well aware, that in many of the occurrences of life we should wish for the best, and content ourselves with the good or the middling; but this should be understood to relate to those faculties, in which a multitude of professors is absolutely necessary. Every town, for example, stands in need of many mechanical artificers; and as neither all, nor the half of them, can be excellent, we are obliged to be satisfied with those that are tolerable. But what necessity is there for multiplying Historians in this proportion, or for people to take upon them the occupation of such, who want the necessary talents to comply with the obligation? What have the multitude of historians ever done but multiply fables? It is commonly thought, that to compile a history, nothing more is necessary, than to be able to read, and write, and to possess or have access to books, from whence to extract the materials. Thus men engage in this undertaking who are full of passions, and poor in talents; whose study

study enables them to do nothing more, than without examination, without judgement, without stile, and without method, copy whatever flatters their imagination, or is favourable to their partiality.

CVII. Hence it is, that we meet with so many books filled with prodigies which never existed. All the marvellous, even abstracted from any particular motive for inserting it, is pleasing to him who writes, and him who reads it. This is inducement sufficient to cause the writer, if he does not invent, to copy and enforce a fable, and give it the appearance, if not of a true, at least of a probable relation. The tale is regaling to his imagination, and he is interested in inserting it, by the expectation, that it will make his history appear more attracting and pleasing to the reader. If, in the course of time, some writer of judgment, should with strong arguments, founded in reason and probability, attack the gossip's tale, they throw in his teeth an infinite number of writers who have patronized it, and treat him as a rash man, for running counter to such a stream of authority; although upon a nice examination, you will find all these amount to no more than one only, who was the person that first invented, or adopted the fable, upon the credit of vain popular rumour; and that

that all the rest are mere copyists from this man; and that they made no inquiry into the premises, nor gave themselves any further trouble, than that of transcribing what they found written by him. But for the present, we will have done with History.

SECT.

A D D I T I O N S

T O T H E

F O R E G O I N G D I S C O U R S E,

Extracted from the Ninth, or Supplemental
Volume to the THEATRICO-CRITICO.

S E C T. I.

I. **T**H E best method of beginning these additions, appears to me, to be by introducing some curious observations made by Plutarch, on the uncertainty of antient History, which we find inserted in his works, with the title of Parallels. The object of this treatise, is to shew, that many of the most illustrious and singular events which we find in the Greek history, are to be met with in the Roman one; all of them attended with exactly the same circumstances, and differ only with respect to the persons who were engaged in them, and the places where they happened; which affords a

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very probable conjecture, that the Roman authors, with a view of blazoning their country with this false and borrowed lustre, copied these events from the Greeks. Plutarch quotes the Greek authors who relate these things, and from whom, in all probability, the Romans copied them.

II. The Roman history says, that the vestal virgin Rhea Silva, having gone into a neighbouring wood to sacrifice, the god Mars took that opportunity of coming upon her by surprize, and ravishing her; the result of which rape was, the twin brothers, Romulus and Remus; who, soon after they were born, were left deserted on the banks of the Tiber, where a she wolf suckled and preserved them; but being afterwards found by the shepherd Faustulas; he took them up and delivered them to his wife Laurentia, to be nursed and reared. The same story, without the least variation in a single particular, is related by Zopirus Byzantinus, of the Grecian Philonomia, the daughter of Niëtimus, who having gone into a wood, and been surprized and ravished there by the god Mars, was afterwards, in consequence of the rape, delivered of two sons, who were exposed on the banks of the river Erimanthus, and carried by the current into a plain, where they received their first nourishment from a wolf; and
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being taken up and preserved by the shepherd Telephus, came afterwards to be kings of Arcadia.

III. We are told that the senators, tired of the dominion of Romulus, killed him in the senate-house; and, in order to conceal his death, carried out each a piece of the defunct king, hid under their garments; in consequence of this contrivance, the body not appearing, they were able to impose upon the people, and persuade them that he had ascended to Heaven. The same story, tittle for tittle, is related by Theophilus of Pisistratus, the ancient king of Orchomena, in his Peloponnesian history. He says, the senators, fired with indignation against him, for favouring the populace more than the nobility, demolished and cut him into pieces in the senate-house, from whence each of them carried out a small portion of his body hid under their cloaths, which they deposited in their houses, and by that means concealed the assassination from the public; and, just afterwards Tlesymachus, one of the faction, pretended that he had seen Pisistratus upon the top of Mount Piseus in the shape of a deity.

IV. Macrobius and Plutarch tell us, that in a short time after the Romans had driven the Gauls from Rome, by whose invasion they were much

weakened, the Latins entered into a league against them, and threatened their total ruin if they did not deliver up to them all the women of quality that were in the city. The senate were perplexed about what resolution to take in so critical a case: but while they were deliberating, all the slaves came, and offered to deceive the enemy, by going out to them dressed in the habits of their mistresses. The senate accepted the offer, and the slaves went forth, making a great parade, and dressed out like gay ladies. The Latins, who devoted the night to revel and debauchery, were surprized, and entirely routed by the Romans. The same story is told by Dafilus, in his history of Lydia; who says, the same demand was made by the Sardinians upon the Smyrnans, which was eluded by the same stratagem, and with the same success.

V. One of the most heroic actions for the service of his country, performed by any man, and which is recognized as such by all the Roman writers, is that of Curtius, a Roman knight. A horrid chasm having opened itself, which threatened to swallow up the city of Rome; and the oracle being consulted about what remedy they should take in this alarming urgency, answered, that tremendous chasm could only be brought to close by throwing into it whatever was most precious

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ous in Rome. Curtius, reflecting that the most precious thing was the life of a man; having dressed himself in compleat armour, mounted his horse, and plunged into the abyfs; upon which the mouth instantly shut. The same story, without the alteration of a circumstance, is told by Calisthenis of Anchurus, the son of the king of Phrygia.

VI. Persenas, king of the Etruscans, having reduced the Romans to great hunger and distress by a close siege, Mucius Scevola undertook to kill him; but directed the blow designed for the king, against one of the generals whom he mistook for him. Being taken a prisoner, he was carried before Porsena; when, finding the blunder he had made, he thrust his hand into the fire, and while it was burning, told the king, that he and four hundred more as resolute as himself, had sallied out of Rome together with a determination of demolishing him; and that Persenas, terrified with the threat, raised the siege. Agatharcides tells exactly the same story of an Athenian, named Agefilas; who, when he was endeavouring to demolish Xerxes, by mistake, killed one of his generals: he afterwards put his hand in the fire, and spoke to Xerxes just in the same manner Mucius had spoke to Porsena.

VII. The battle of the three Horatios with the three Curios, in which two of the first being slain, he who remained alive, by a keen stratagem, slew the three Curios; and, returning home a conqueror, upbraided his sister for lamenting the death of one of the Curios, to whom she was betrothed: I say, this story with all its circumstances, may be found related by Demeratus, of three brothers of the city of Tregea, and three of that of Phe-nea, both in Arcadia. Plutarch, in his book of Parallels, instances many other relations, greatly resembling one another, and which are reciprocally applied by both the Greek and Roman historians, to their own countries; but I shall omit them, because they are not so uniform in their circumstances, as not to admit of the repetition of them being imputable to accident: but the perfect similitude of all those we have instanced, demonstrate, that they were copied from one another.

VIII. The Abbé Salliere, in a dissertation which was printed in the sixth volume of the History of the Academy Royal and Belles Lettres at Paris, pretends, that in this opposite application of uniform events, those who copied were the Greeks; but as the great authority of Plutarch is in favour of a contrary opinion, he endeavours to shew that it was not Plutarch, but some other
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Greek author who was deserving of little credit, that wrote the *Parallels*; and that the intent of the writer, be he who he would, was nothing more, than to make it appear that Greece had not been inferior to Rome in numbers of great men.

IX. I, having read with attention the book of *Parallels*, find most reason to suppose that the Romans, and not the Greeks, were the copyists. The design which the Abbé Sallier attributes to the Greeks of being desirous to honour their country, does not seem to have much force; because many of the events related in the *Parallels*, tend rather to dishonour it. But it has little effect on the object of our intention, which is that of shewing the uncertainty of history, whether the original relation of, or the copying of those famous facts, ought to be attributed to the Greeks or the Romans; but the truth is, that nobody at present, in deciding the question, can go beyond feeble conjectures, and therefore the imputation must be left at the doors of both parties.

X. The Abbé Lenglet du Fresnoys says, that the descent of the holy oil and fleurs de lis from Heaven, are marvellous events, unknown to the original French writers of eminence, altho'

they are much celebrated by middling authors of these later times. (*Mem. Trevoux, anno 1735, art. 66.*)

XI. Father Menochio, tom. 3. cent. 11. cap. 4, proves, by many authorities, the antiquity of saluting and praying a blessing on those who sneeze, to have been ages prior to the days of St. Gregory; and we have already observed, that in the New World, and among many of the barbarous nations who inhabit it, we have found this custom to have been established. We shall add at present, a pleasant tale upon this occasion, which some authors tell us of the king of Monomotapa. Whenever this king sneezes, all those who are in his presence salute him; but they do it in so high a voice, that they are heard by those in the antichamber and the adjacent apartments, upon which they do the same; and the salutation is repeated in this manner till it gets into the street, and runs all over the city; so that every sneeze of the king, is attended by horrid outcry of many thousands of his subjects,

Dr. Prideaux, who wrote the life of the false prophet Mahomet, quoted in the Critical Dictionary of Bayle, says, that his ancestors, for four generations prior to him, who were named Cæsar, held the government of the city of Mecca, and

and the custody of the idolatrous temple that was in it; which was not less venerated by the Arabs, than that at Delphos was by the Greeks; but what certainty have we that this illustrious genealogy, is not one of the many fictions, with which the Arabs endeavour to honour that famous impostor?

XIII. The essay or discourse of the Marquis of St. Aubin, on the Uncertainty of History, in the first book, chap. 6. of his Treatise on Opinions, is so pleasing and curious, on account of the variety of the informations, and the opportuneness of the remarks contained in it, that I thought I should make a very acceptable present to many of my readers by translating it; and especially to those who don't understand French, or who have not the book: but I must premise before I give the translation, that I shall divest it of the quotations, and omit such passages, as are nearly the same with those we have given in the original discourse, or the additions we have already made to it; and also, that I shall give here and there a critical note upon such passages as seem to require it.

A Trans-

A Translation of the Sixth Chapter of the First
Book of the TREATISE ON OPINION.

The little Faith that is to be placed in History.

XIV. It is a very judicious reflexion made by Plutarch in his life of Pericles, that it was very difficult, or nearly impossible, to discern the true from the false by the help of history; because, if it is written many ages after the events it treats of, the antiquity of the transactions is an obstacle to coming at the knowledge of them; and if it is written during the lives of the persons of whom it speaks, hatred, envy, or motives of adulation, excite the author to corrupt and disfigure the truth.

XV. Is it not probable that historians have been partial to their own nation? that they have been silent upon, or have spoke slightly of the merit of those whose families have fallen to decay, or been nearly extinguished? and that on the contrary, they have endeavoured to elevate the names and extol the fame of those families from whom they expected to be rewarded? The motives for disguising the truth are many; and Tacitus, notwithstanding his protestations that he is perfectly uninfluenced by hatred or the hopes
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of reward; I say, notwithstanding this, a suspicious reader would give most credit to Estrady; who says, that in order to be a good historian, a man should divest himself of country and religion, should be of no profession, nor a follower of any party; which comes pretty near to saying he should not be a man.

XVI. It would be loss of time, says S. Real, to study history in hopes of knowing with certainty what has passed in the world; as the principal information that can be derived from it, is a knowledge of what such and such authors believed; and that we should not so much seek in history for facts, as for the opinions of men. Clio, the muse who presides over history, becomes a prostitute, who, for any price, surrenders herself to the embraces of the first who solicits her favours.

XVII. Velleius Paterculus, the unworthy flatterer of Tiberius and his favourite Sejanus, may be more properly said to have composed a panegyric than a history. Zozimus let himself be carried away by passion, and his resentment against Constantine; and Eusebius flattered him in every thing. Titus Livius was an avowed favourer of the party of Pompey; and Dion Cassius was very partial to Cæsar.

XVIII. History is a present, which should only be made to posterity. Bocalini recommends, that an historian should write nothing but what has come within the compass of his own observation; and that his book should not be published till after he is dead. But even supposing that he has been quite impartial, which, by the way, is a thing rather to be wished for than expected, still, the work of every writer partakes of his own character or disposition. Sallust is a moralist; Tacitus, a politician; and Titus Livius, superstitious and an orator. They all endeavour to point out to us the causes of events which were unknown, not only to the people who lived when they happened, but even to those who had some hand in negotiating public business.

XIX. Greece was so fertile in historians, that the account of one battle was related by more than three hundred authors. Lucian compares the passion of the Greeks for writing history, to the epidemical disease of the Abderitans, in which there was much madness mixed.

XX. All ancient history was almost totally disfigured by the poets, who were continually interweaving fictions with truth; as may be seen by the history of Jupiter and all the family of the
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Titans, by those of Isis, Dido, Hercules, and the Argonautic Expedition; by that of the siege of Troy, and many other examples.

History partakes of the Genius of the People to whom it relates.

XXI. It is easy to discern, that history has more affinity to the genius of the people to whom it appertains, than to truth or the importance of events. All this science of history, such as it has been handed down to us, is the fruit of the passion the Greeks had for writing and relating stories. The history of antiquity, has communicated to us nought but such things, as had relation to the Greeks and the Romans. For, not to mention the continent of America, discovered in these latter ages, which is so extensive and important, that of other countries was not drawn out of oblivion, but only in proportion as their affairs were connected with the Greek and Roman histories. Profane history has scarce taken any notice of the Jews; and in the little it has said of them, there have been gross errors. It would likewise have made very little mention of the ancient Gauls, who extended their conquests and colonies almost over the whole world, if they had not given occasion to be taken notice

tice of by their pillaging some of the Greek temples; and by the wars, offensive and defensive, which they had with the Romans. The four celebrated empires of the Assyrians, Persians, Greeks, and Romans, were not equal, either in their duration, or the extent of their conquests, to four other powers, of whom we have only a partial or trifling information; these are the Chinese, Scythians, Arabs, and Turks *. But, notwithstanding the obscurity of history with regard to these empires, we may venture to affirm, that of China exceeded that of Assyria, both in its duration, the number of its inhabitants, the policy of its government, and the extent of its limits. The Conquests of Almanzor, which comprehended Africa, to the Western Ocean, and almost all Spain, were more extensive than those of Cyrus. The conquests of Alexander can't be compared with those of Tamerlane †. This conqueror subdued a portion of China, and opened a passage through Tartary and Muscovy, for the sake of serving

* It seems as if the power and extent of these empires was not well calculated, when it is asserted that either of them exceeded that of the Roman empire.

† Tamerlane's extending his conquests further than ever Alexander did his, is very uncertain; and the enumeration the author immediately gives of them, differs from the account given us by Herbelot of this matter, who is a writer exceedingly well versed in Oriental history.

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the emperor of Constantinople, and triumphing over Bajazet; and, on his return home, aggregated to his dominions, the countries of Syria, Persia, and a part of India.

XXII. Our want of historical information, respecting those numerous swarms of courageous and powerful people, who came out of Northern Scythia, and, under different names, dismembered the whole Western Roman Empire, is very extraordinary; which they did many centuries before the original Turks of Eastern Scythia, who came from the coasts of the Caspian Sea, and were called in, as some say, by the emperors of Constantinople, and, as others say, by the kings of Persia; and who, upon the ruins of the Eastern, Roman, and Arabian empires, established a power more formidable than ever that of Rome had been*, the history of all which warlike and formidable people, is very little known.

Of the Passion for the wonderful.

XXIII. The love of the marvellous is one of the stumbling-blocks of history. There are some

* The author in this place is very hyperbolic; for, it is certain, that so far from the power of the Turks exceeding that of the Roman empire when it was at its height, the court of Constantinople does not now command a third part of the countries which were formerly subject to Rome.

historians,

historians, who take a pleasure in relating incredible things, and seem as if they sympathized in the admiration which they produce in credulous readers.

XXIV. The passion for the prodigious, has been the cause of inventing many extraordinary stories. Justin tells us, that after the defeat of the Persians at the battle of Marathon, Cynegyrus, an Athenian, pursued the enemy in their flight; and when they in great disorder threw themselves into their ships, he, to prevent their escape, laid hold of one of the ships with his hands, but they being successively cut off, he seized and detained her with his teeth.

XXV. Plutarch relates, that Pyrrhus being wounded in the head in a combat with the Mamerines, was obliged to retire, to get his wound dressed, and to refresh himself; but, after a little while, in spite of all the opposition his own people could make against it, he returned to the field, and, irritated by the bravados of one of the enemy of gigantic stature, he, fired with indignation, advanced up to him, and with his sword discharged a blow on his head with such fury, that he split him in two, and that one half of his carcase fell down on one side of him, and the other on the other.

XXVI.

XXVI. Procopius writes, that two women, who kept a house of lodging and entertainment for travellers, in the time of a famine, killed and ate up seventeen men : and we read in Maffeus, that a Portuguese soldier, having in an engagement expended all his ball, drew his own teeth, with which he charged his musquet, and fired them on the enemy.

Obligations of an Historian.

XXVII. History should not resemble a picture, which aims at representing nature in a beautiful light ; for, as Father Orleans observes, a fine touch passes easily from the imagination to the pen ; and, although it may illustrate a hero, is very apt to wound the truth, which is the most essential character of history.

XXVIII. Who is ignorant, says Cicero, that the first law of history enjoins the historian not to have the audacity to write any kind of lie, or to want courage to speak the truth in all things, be the danger of doing it what it may ; and that, as far as he is able, he should avoid the suspicion of being influenced, either by love or hatred ? And Polybius, long before Cicero's time, had

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said, that the historian who suppresses truths, is not less a liar than him who writes fables.

The great Sincerity of some Historians.

XXIX. Polybius conforms very exactly to his own maxim, which we have just repeated. This author's mode of proceeding in his history, is so distant from all dissimulation, that he comments upon the errors committed by his own father Lycortas. Thucydides omits nothing that could reflect honour on Cleon and Barcidas, by whose management he had been banished from Athens.

XXX. Titus Livius makes honourable mention of Brutus and Cassius, although they were the enemies of Augustus, in whose reign, and under whose auspices, he wrote his history, and delivered down to posterity the murderers of Cæsar, with the characters of virtuous citizens. Grotius gave a striking instance of his sincerity in his history of the Low Countries, by always speaking of prince Maurice of Nassau, with as much moderation and indifference as if he had never been persecuted by him.

XXXI. We are given to understand by a passage in Plutarch, that in old times, authors did
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not think themselves sufficiently qualified to write a history, till they had travelled through the countries which were the theatres of the events they were to treat of. Polybius prepared himself for writing his history, by travelling through all the world which was known in his time. Salust passed the sea, in order to see with his own eyes the theatre of the Jugurthan war. John Chartier assures us, that by order of Charles the Seventh, he attended the most important expeditions of that prince, to the end that he might be a witness of the facts he was to relate.

XXXII. In Ethiopia, in Egypt, in Chaldea, in Persia, and in Syria, the writing of history, and the custody of annals, was confided to none but the priests. Numa recommended it to the pontiffs of Rome, to write the history of the country in the public registers; but when the Gauls took the city, these registers were for the most part burnt. In China, the superintendance of history is given to the magistrates; notwithstanding which, all their public registers are full of impostures, calculated either to establish the worship of false deities, to flatter their princes, or to indulge the taste and vanity of the nation.

Histories filled with Fables.

XXXIII. Herodotus, who is called the Father of History, was looked upon by the antients as a very fabulous writer. Strabo, Quintilian, and Causabon, don't give more credit to Herodotus, than to Homer, Hesiod, and the tragic poets. Lucian, in his Journey to Hell, tells us, he saw Herodotus there, who was tormented among others, for having deceived posterity.

XXXIV. Pliny gives Diodorus Siculus the honour of having been the first historian among the Greeks, who wrote seriously, and abstained from fables. Louis Vives, on the contrary, thinks Diodorus was a fabulous writer, and one of no solidity; and the same Diodorus, treats as fabulous, all the writers who went before him.

XXXV. The learned are divided in their opinions upon the *Cyropedia* of Xenophon. Many adopt the sentiment of Cicero, who looked upon it as a drawing of invention, designed to represent a perfect prince. Notwithstanding this, a contrary opinion seems to prevail at this day, and the *Cyropedia* is considered as a true history.

XXXVI.

XXXVI. Afinius Pollio, thinks the Commentaries of Cæsar are not written with much care, nor with much sincerity : and Vossius makes mention of the strange caprice of a man, who told him, that after having meditated deliberately, and with much application on the subject, he had wrote a book, in which he had proved with invincible arguments, that Cæsar had never passed the Alps, and that all he had wrote in his Commentaries about his wars with the Gauls was false. Procopius, in his General History, loads the emperor Justinian and his wife the empress Theodofia with eulogiums ; and likewise Belisarius and his wife Antonina ; but in his Anecdotes, or Secret History, he is outrageous in his abuse of them, and calls them by the most opprobrious names. Aretinus boasted that he was the arbiter and disposer of the reputation of princes, dispensing among them eulogiums or reflections, just as they were generous or parsimonious towards him. He tells us, that Charles the Fifth upon his return from the expedition against Tunis, presented him with a gold chain, and that he said to the emperor upon receiving it, " This is but a very scanty reward to excite me to speak well of an enterprize that was so badly concerted."

XXXVII. The monuments themselves are not
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always faithful vouchers for the truth of facts; for even the brass and the marble will sometimes lie. The inscription on the triumphal arch of Titus, erected to celebrate the conquest of Jerusalem, declares, that no emperor before him had ever taken or dared to besiege that city. Notwithstanding this, besides the assertion being contradicted by the authority of holy writ, Cicero in one of his letters to Atticus, calls Pompey, *our Jerusalemite*; and no one at Rome was ignorant that Jerusalem was one of the conquests of Pompey.

Of the ancient Chronicles.

XXXVIII. If the historians of the first rate, and the monuments are suspicious, what shall we say of our ancient chronicles? Why, I fear, we can call them nothing but miserable attested novels filled with fables; and this is the opinion which a celebrated academician expresses of them. After the fierce barbarous nations of the North, spread themselves and their ignorance over all the parts of Europe, the historians degenerated into novelists: then, the relation of incredible and wonderful adventures began to be looked upon as the sublime part of history. Thelefinus, who is said to have lived about the middle of the sixth century, in the reign of king Arthur, and Melchinus,

Melchinus, who is not quite so ancient, wrote the history of Great Britain, their own country ; and of king Arthur, and his knights of the round table ; which they disfigured with a thousand fables. The same may be said of Hannibald the Frank ; who, although he is much more modern, some believe to have been contemporary with Clodovicus, whose history is a rhapsody of lies, coarsly imagined. Such also was the history, of which Gildas, a religious of Wales, was said to be the author ; and which relates an infinity of marvellous things ; of king Arthur, Perceval, Lancelot, and many others. The judicious criticism which prevails at present, will be careful to transmit to posterity a system of ancient history, amended and illustrated with a great number of useful observations ; and also, a more chaste and correct one of our own times. But, notwithstanding all the care and precaution a historian can take, and all the industry he can exert, it is certain, we can't know the characters of men, and the motives which led to events, but from the memoirs of those who had a principal hand in conducting public business.

Excessive Pyrrhonism in History.

XXXIX. Carlovicus, who had a share in the most material transactions of his time, upon read-

ing the history of Sleidan, and finding the truth of things so disfigured in it, declared, that history inclined him to withhold his assent to all that was related in any other, either ancient or modern. Sir Thomas Brown, an Englishman, the author of a tract, intitled *The Religion of a Physician*, in which he speaks of history, says, 'I don't give more credit to relations of things past, than to predictions of those to come.' Thus we see men are disposed to run into extremes both of credulity and pyrrhonism.

XL. Mr. Bayle says, that history is dressed and prepared, nearly the same as victuals is dressed and prepared in the kitchen; every nation cooks it in their own way; in consequence of which, the same thing comes to be dressed in as many different modes as there are countries in the world; and nearly all men, find those most grateful to their palates which they are most accustomed to. Such, with little variation, is the lot of all history. Every nation, every sect, taking the same facts, let us say crude, prepare and season them to their own taste; and afterwards, they appear to every reader, either true or false, just as they agree with or are repugnant to his prejudices. We may even carry the comparison still further; for there are certain eatables, absolutely unknown in some countries, the inhabitants of which

which countries would probably loath the sight of, let them be dressed and seasoned in what manner they would ; so there are some facts that would not gain credit but with this or that particular nation, or this or that particular sect ; and all the others would be inclined to treat them as calumnies and impositions.

XLI. Many historians, from various motives, transmit to posterity some facts which they themselves did not assent to. Eneas Sylvius, in his history of Bohemia, says, *Plura scribo, quam credo.*

Relations of Battles which seem incredible.

XLII. The accounts of many battles contain circumstances which appear incredible. Plutarch tells us, that Marcus Valerius won a battle against the Sabines, in which he slew thirteen thousand of the enemy without losing one of his own men. And Diodorus Siculus, attributes the same happy success to the Lacedemonians, in an engagement they had with the Arcadians, of whom they killed ten thousand without the loss of a man on their own side, which so fell out, that the prediction of an oracle might be verified, who had pronounced, that war should not cause a single tear to be shed in Sparta.

XLIII.

XLIII. In the battle which the Consul Fabius Maximus gained over the Allobroges and Auvernagans, Appian says, there were but fifteen men slain on the part of the Romans, and that there remained a hundred and twenty thousand Gauls dead on the field of battle; and adds, that the Romans in the pursuit, took and destroyed eighty thousand more, who were either drowned in the Rhone or carried prisoners to Rome.

XLIV. Sylla, in his memoirs, writes, that at the battle of Cheronea, in which he routed Archelaus, the lieutenant of Mithridates, there perished a hundred and ten thousand of the enemy, and only twelve Romans. And in the same memoirs he tells us, that in the battle he fought with young Marius, with the loss of no more than twenty three of his own men, he killed twenty thousand of his antagonist's, and took eight thousand prisoners.

XLV. In the life of Lucullus, written by Plutarch, we read, that in the battle he had with Tigranes, in Tigranocerta, the whole of the cavalry of the king, and more than a hundred thousand infantry, were put to the sword, and that there remained only five of Lucullus's soldiers dead
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on the field, and that his wounded did not exceed a hundred.

XLVI. Alexander of Alexandria writes, that Pompey, in one of his battles with Mithridates, did not lose more than twenty soldiers, and that there fell on the side of the king forty thousand.

XLVII. In the battle of Chalons, between the Count Aëtius and Theodoric, king of the Visigoths, on one side, and Attila, king of the Huns, on the other; in which Theodoric was killed. Some authors make the number of the slain in both armies to amount to three hundred thousand men. The historians in general agree, that they at least amounted to a hundred and seventy thousand, without reckoning among the number fifteen thousand French and Gepides, who fell in with each other accidentally in the night, and fought in the dark with such fury, that not one of the whole number was left alive.

XLVIII. There are authors, who, upon the credit of Paul the Deacon and Anastasius Bibliothecarius, compute the number of men the Saracens lost in the battle of Poitiers, at three hundred and seventy five thousand; which account,
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say the judicious authors of the History of Languedoc, seems fabulous. Some, in order to give an air of probability to this circumstance, have pretended that there were included in this computation a great number of women, children, slaves, and other followers of the camp. But Valois has shewn, that in this irruption none but soldiers passed the Perines: and Mezeray says, that the army of the Saracens did not exceed eighty, or at most a hundred thousand men.

XLIX. In the year 891, the emperor Arnulfus, gained so compleat a victory over the Normans, that out of a hundred thousand men, which their army consisted of, not one escaped; and that on the side of the Imperialists they did not lose a single man. The authority quoted for this relation, is the History of the World, by Chevreau, lib. 5.

L. Mariana, after all the chronicles, says, that in the battle which the three kings of Aragon, Navarre, and Castile, fought with the Moors, the Christians lost only twenty-five men, and that the number which perished of the infidels amounted to two hundred thousand. In that of Tarifa also, the Moors lost two hundred thousand, and the Christians only twenty.

LI.

LI. What historians relate of the victories of the Norman princes in Sicily, is likewise void of all probability: for instance, that out of three hundred thousand men defeated by Roger, not one escaped; that the sons of Tancred, with seven hundred horse and five hundred infantry, beat the army of the emperor of Constantinople, consisting of seventy thousand men. But all we have hitherto mentioned, is nothing compared with what is told by Nicetas in his history of the emperor Alexis; which is, that at the siege of Constantinople, one Frenchman only, put to flight the whole Grecian army.

LII. Lucian treats as fabulous and ridiculous all the accounts of such disproportionate numbers slain. The remark of Titus Livius, when he was told of an alarming apparition that had been seen in the tomb of Veis, may be applied to many relations in history. He says, these incidents are more proper for the theatre than history; and I don't chuse either to affirm or refute them, it being sufficient to know they were once published by the voice of fame.

Diversity

Diversity of Opinions upon many famous historical Facts.

LIII. Metrodorus Lampfacenus without the least scruple affirms, that the heroes of whom Homer makes mention in the Iliad, such as Agamemnon, Achilles, Hector, Paris, and Eneas, are all fictitious persons, who never existed.

LIV. Some authors assert, that the number of women stolen by the Romans from the Sabines, did not exceed thirty. Valerius Antias and Dionysius Halicarnasseus, make them amount to five hundred and twenty seven; and Juba computes them at six hundred and eighty three.

LV. Titus Livius, Florus, Plutarch, and Aurelius Victor, say, that the dictator Camillus defeated and drove away the Gauls who had taken Rome; Polybius, Justin, and Suetonius, tell us, that the Venetians having made an irruption into the territories of the Gauls; these, that they might be at leisure to attend to the defence of their own country, accommodated matters with the Romans, who agreed to pay them a certain sum of money, upon condition of their leaving Rome, with which money and the plunder they had made, they returned home.

LVI.

LVI. Plutarch begins his life of Lycurgus thus: "We can say nothing positively of the law-giver Lycurgus, because historians speak very variously concerning him, and *because*, respecting his origin, his voyages, his death, and even his laws, and the form of government he established, there are divers traditions; but there is more disagreement still in the accounts we have of him, with respect to the time he lived in."

LVII. Herodotus, Diodorus, Trogus Pompeius, Justin, Pausanias, Plutarch, Quintus Curtius, and many other authors, have spoke of the nation of the Amazons. Strabo denies, that such a nation ever existed. Arrian considers as very suspicious, all that has been written of the Amazons. Others have understood the Amazons to have been armies of men, who were governed and commanded by warlike women; and they shew, that these examples were not unfrequent among the antients; for the Medes and the Sabeans obey'd queens; and Semiramis commanded the Assyrians; Thomiris, the Scythians; Cleopatra, the Egyptians; Boadicea, the Britains; and Zenobia, the Palmyrenes.

LVIII. Appian believes, that the Amazons were not any particular nation, but that they gave this name to all women who went to war,

be they of what nation they would. Some think, the pretended Amazons were a barbarous people, who wore long robes, shaved their beards, and dressed and ornamented their heads after the manner of the women in Thrace. According to Diodorus Siculus, Hercules, the son of Alcmena, whom Eurystheus charged with bringing to him the shoulder-belt of Hyppolita, went to the coasts of the Thermodontes, to engage, and there destroyed this warlike nation.

LIX. But notwithstanding this, the most celebrated traces of history, respecting the Amazons, are of a later date, than either the Grecian Hercules, or the son of Alcmena; because the stealing of Antiope by Theseus, excited the Amazons to undertake the war, in which they conquered all Attica, and pitched their camp upon the parade of the Areopagus itself. Pensthelea, queen of the Amazons, went to the succour of Troy, and was killed by Achilles, and Thalestris. Another of their queens, accompanied by three hundred of her warriors, went in search of Alexander, with a view of having a posterity by him.

LX. Dion Chrysostom says, that Herodotus solicited from the Corinthians, some recompence for writing his Greek Histories; but they having returned for answer, that they did not chuse to purchase honour with money, he quite altered the relation

relation of the naval battle of Salamois, and charged Adimanthus, a Corinthian General, with flying with his whole Squadron at the beginning of the battle.

LXI. Timoleon freed Corinth his own country, from the tyranny of Timophanes, his brother. Plutarch relates the transaction in this manner. Timoleon, and two of his friends who were zealous assertors of liberty, having taken a solemn oath to depose the tyrant if he refused to relinquish his usurpation, went to his house, and finding they could not move him by intreaties, Timoleon retired a little and burst into tears, and at that instant, his two friends flew upon Timophanes, and tore him to pieces. Diodorus Siculus says, Timoleon killed his brother on the public parade. The first historian considers the love of liberty as a principle implanted in the nature of man, and therefore endeavours all he can to soften and excuse the atrociousness of the act. The second blazons and exaggerates it, with a view of exalting the zeal of Timoleon for his country. In the midst of so many dangers, produced by the characters, motives, and passions of authors, truth, in navigating the sea of history, is shipwrecked, and hinder'd from being handed down to posterity.

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LXII.

LXII. Cyrus, according to Xenophon, died composed, and in his bed. Onesicritus, Arrian, Herodotus, Justin, and Valerius Maximus, affirm, that Thomyris, queen of the Massagetes, having overcome, and made him a prisoner, caused him to be put to death, and his head to be immersed in a vessel filled with human blood, in order, as the irritated queen declared, that the thirst he had ever had for that fluid might be satiated. Ctesias writes, that he was killed by an arrow shot at him by an Indian. Diodorus, that he was made a prisoner, and crucified by a queen of the Scythians; and according to Lucian, he died of grief, on account of Cambyfes his son, having under the false pretence of an order from him, put to death the major part of those he most esteemed.

One of the most remarkable transactions of the Roman History, is the defeat of the Fabians, in the engagement of Cremera. This body, composed of one family only, and which Florus calls a Patrician Army, were cut to pieces, and out of three hundred and six Fabians, there remained only one youth of fourteen years old alive, who was spared on account of his tender age. There are few facts which have been more unanimously attested than this, nor by a greater number of authors. Titus Livius, Ovid, Aurelius Victor, Silius,

Silius, and Festus, relate it exactly in the same manner ; but notwithstanding this, Dionysius Halicarnassus rejects it as intirely fabulous. Titus Livius places the death and fanatic consecration of the two Decii, in the wars against the Latins and the Samnites ; but Cicero places it in those with the Etruscans, and against Pyrrhus.

LXIV. The silence of Polybius, respecting the fate of Regulus after his captivity, has occasioned many learned men to doubt of all that has been said on that subject.

LXV. Aurelius Victor relates, the emperor Claudius the second, knowing that the books of the Sibyls promised great victories and prosperity to the empire, if the first man in the senate would voluntarily surrender himself to be sacrificed for the good of his country, which coming to be talked of, the eldest senator offered himself to become the victim ; but the emperor would not accept the tender, chusing rather to reserve to himself the glory of that sacrifice, alledging, that the prediction applied to him, as prince and chief of the senate. The same author adds, that for this magnanimous action, a statue of gold was erected to his memory in the Temple of Jupiter, and a bust of gold in the senate. He says further, the name of the senior senator, who offered his life to obtain the completion of the Sibyl
L 2 prediction,

prediction, was Pompeius Bassus. Neither Trebelius Pollio, nor Eutropius, make the least mention of all this; but on the contrary, have both affirmed, this Emperor died of a natural disease.

LXVI. That manifestation of heroic fortitude, in the action of biting the tongue off with the teeth in the torture, is attributed by Jamblicus, to Timyca Pythagorica; by Tertullian, to the Courtesan Leæna; by Valerius Maximus, Pliny, Diogenes Laertius, and Philo Judæus, to the Philosopher Anaxarchus; and by St. Jerome, in his Life of Saint Paul the first Hermit, to a holy Martyr *.

LXVII. Some say that Placidia caused her brother, the emperor Honorius, to sign an instrument, by which he granted this princess in marriage to one of his meanest officers, and that she afterwards complaining to the emperor of this indignity, he denied that he had ever done any such thing; upon which she shewed him his sign manual, and by this instance, illustrated and corrected the facility with which he had been used to sign papers he never read; for she herself had prevailed on him to set his hand to the instru-

* There is no difficulty in supposing this heroic action was performed by different people, there having been innumerable instances of those who have found themselves in situations where it was laudable to exert it.

ment,

ment, upon suggesting to him, that it contained his assent to a matter of a very different nature. Others put this stratagem in the head of Pulcheria, who betrayed her brother the emperor Theodosius into signing a deed, by which he consented to sell his wife the empress Eudoxia for a slave.

LXVIII. Upon no other principle than that of the violent preoccupation of historians, can we account for the diversity with which the death of Julian the Apostate is related. Some say, that being mortally wounded in a battle with the Persians, and finding his dissolution approach, he catch'd his blood in his hands, and in a rage threw it up towards heaven, exclaiming with great earnestness to our Saviour, Thou hast conquered, Nazarene, thou hast conquered. Others tells us, that he tried in vain to extract the arrow from his wound, and in the attempt cut his hand with it, and finding himself in a desperate state, ordered, that they should carry him into the heat of the battle, to encourage his soldiers; and when he was dying, he with his last breath, gave thanks to the Gods for having blessed him with so glorious a death, in the flower of his age, and in the full career of his victories, and before he had experienced any reverse of fortune to tarnish his laurels; to which he added, that long before

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that era, the Gods had announced this death to him *.

LXIX. The punishment of queen Brunegilda, who, it is said, Clodovicus the second condemned to be torn to pieces by wild horses, for having taken away the lives of ten Kings, is very doubtful and suspicious. Mariana, who treats this relation as a mere fable, says, the French historians had a great propensity to credit and write marvellous occurrences, which he is at a loss whether to impute to their simplicity or their assurance; and Pasquier refutes separately and distinctly, every accusation that has been charged on that queen.

LXX. Historians are much divided in their opinions, with respect to how the popes came to change their names upon their exaltation to the papal chair. Fr. Paul Sarpi attributes the origin of it to the Germans, whose names sounding harsh and dissonant in the ears of the Italians, they upon being elected popes changed them; which came afterwards to be a custom, says this author, that was followed by the other popes, and by which they meant to express, that they had changed their private and human affections for public and

* This last declaration favours strongly of a heathenish fiction.

divine cares. Platina pretends, that Sergius the second was the first that changed his name, because that he before went by, had a harsh sound. Baronius treats this reason with contempt, and attributes the origin of the practice to Sergius the third, whose name happening to be Peter, he, from a motive of humility, divested himself of the name of the Prince of the Apostles. Onuphrius believes, that John the twenty-second first set this example, because he would not preserve as pope, the name of Octavianus, which had a heathenish sound. Many are of opinion, that this changing the name was done to imitate St. Peter, whose name of Simon was by our Redeemer changed to that of Cephas.

LXXI. Although the fable of Pope Joan has been refuted by even the Protestants themselves, among whom we may reckon David Blondel, who wrote with an express intention of doing it; there have not been wanting some, who had the reputation of men of learning, who have endeavoured to establish as true so fabulous a fact*.

LXXII. The original institution of the Electors of Germany is a matter much contested.

* There is no learned man at present who defends this chimera: Bayle, although a protestant, confutes it demonstratively in his Critical Dictionary.

Some attribute it to Charles the great. Others, such as Blondo, Nauclerus, and Platina, to Gregory the fifth. Maimburgus, and Pasquier, to a celebrated council that was held in the time of this pope. Many again pretend, that Gregory the fifth, the emperor Otho the third, and the princes of Germany, concurred together in making this regulation. According to Machiavel, Gregory the fifth having been driven from Rome by the populace, and reinstated by the emperor Otho the third ; he, to chastise the Romans, transferred their rights of chusing the Emperor, to the archbishops of Mentz, Treves, and Cologne, and to the three secular princes, the Count Palatine, the Duke of Saxony, and the Marquis of Brandenburg.

LXXIII. The Germans themselves, and they only, enjoyed the right of electing an emperor. Albertus, Abbot of Stade, who was an author contemporary with the emperor Frederick the second, says in formal terms, that Gregory the ninth, who had excommunicated Frederick the second, wrote to the German princes, requiring them to elect another emperor ; to which they answered, that it did not belong to the pope to concern himself with the election of an emperor, for that was a right appertaining solely to themselves.

selves. The same author immediately adds, that by virtue of an ordinance, which had been before made by these princes by common consent, the right of electing an emperor, was declared to be vested in the archbishops of Mentz, Treves, and Cologn, the Count Palatin, the Duke of Saxony, the Marquis of Brandenburg, and the King of Bohemia. Paulus Vindelecus, in his treatise upon the electors, says, that long before this, it was the custom, to present to the seven great officers of the empire, him who had the most suffrages in the diet; and according to Aventinus in his Annals, and Onuphrius in his Treatise on the Imperial Diets, the right of electing an emperor was restrained by Pope Gregory the tenth to the seven electors.

LXXIV. All that can with certainty be deduced from this variety of opinions, is, that the institution of the electors was not antecedent to the thirteenth century, and that it did not take place till after the reign of Frederick the second; for before that time, all the contemporary authors testify, the princes, prelates, and German nobles, elected the emperor. Lampadius, a great German lawyer, places the institution of the electoral college in the reign of Frederick the second; and Otho Frisingensis says, that Frederick
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the first, called Red Beard, was elected by all the Princes of the empire. Trithemius, in his Chronicle, determines the beginning of the suffrages of the electors, to have commenced at the election of William Count of Holland, in the year 1247. According to Frederick Brockelman, the mode of electing by seven, began at the election of Adolphus Count of Nassau, who, he says, was chosen by the three archbishops, the three secular Princes, and a proxy on the part of the King of Bohemia. At another election, the Archbishops of Treves and Mentz, the King of Bohemia, and the Marquis of Brandenburg by proxy, gave their votes for Louis of Bavaria; and the Archbishop of Cologne, the Count Palatin, and the Duke of Saxony, voted for Frederick of Austria. This division of the suffrages of the Electors, proves clearly, that they then consisted of no more than seven. The electoral order was not formally and permanently settled, till it was established by the Golden Bull of the emperor Charles the fourth.

LXXV. William du Bellai de Langey, and Monsieur Haillan, say, that the famous Maid of Orleans, Joan d'Arc, was not burnt; and Father Vignier adds, that after her imprisonment by the English, or rather after being released from that imprisonment

imprisonment, she married with Gil de Armuesa, and left children by him. The author of the Latin poem, which contains her history, says, that after she had suffered the punishment of being burnt alive, to which the English had condemned her, her memory was restored to credit by a decree.

LXXVI. The historians of the times in which the event happened, are not agreed upon the circumstances of the assassination of the Duke of Burgundy, at Montereau Faut-Yonne, in 1419; some say, that the Duke, upon approaching the Dauphin, fell on his knees to salute him, and that then, Tranquildo du Chatel gave him a blow with a hatchet, which he instantly repeated, and the duke fell dead. Others tell us, that the duke attempting to make the dauphin a prisoner, the attendants of the dauphin who were with him, fell upon the duke and killed him. Others again say, that three gentlemen of the defunct duke of Orleans, attended this interview, with an intention of revenging the death of their late master; which design they executed, by killing the duke so suddenly and unexpectedly, that it was impossible to prevent it.

LXXVII. Alexis Piamontes, speaking of an elixir calculated to restore blind people to their sight, says, that this remedy was contrived at a
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consultation of the most learned physicians of Italy, in 1438, for the purpose of recovering the sight of the emperor of Constantinople, who was then attending the council of Ferrara with the pope Eugenius the Fourth, and that in fact, it did restore his eye-sight perfectly. Father Le Brun, in his history of superstitious practices, gives us this passage of Alexis Piamontes, and says, that in order to find out the truth of the fact, he had examined all the contemporary authors who had spoke of the emperor John Palologus, and what happened to him at Ferrara in 1438; and that upon this enquiry, he found that neither Blondo, Ducas, nor Calcondylas, had wrote a word concerning the loss or recovery of this emperor's sight at Ferrara; and that Sylvester Scyropulus, so far from giving us to understand that this emperor had been blind at Ferrara, or had suffered the least disorder in his eyes during his abode there, says, that instead of attending the business of the council, he amused himself continually with hunting and shooting, which is a diversion, not well calculated for a man who has lost his eyes, or has even an impediment in his sight *.

* The author should not place among those, whose opinion ought to have weight in history, a man, who deals like a mountebank, in nostrums and secrets.

LXXVIII. Varillas, in his anecdotes of Florence, writes, that Peter de Medicis finding his father dead, after Leoni his physician had given assurances that he could cure him; in a fit of rage, fell upon Leoni and tumbled him headlong into a well, where he was suffocated. Angelo Politianus, who was present at his decease, and who, in one of his letters on the subject, writes all the circumstances of the death of Lorenzo the father of Peter de Medicis, says, that Leoni, in a fit of despair at not having been able to cure Lorenzo according to his promise, threw himself into a well, and was drowned there. Who shall we believe in this case, Angelo Politianus, or Varillas? It may be that the enemies of Peter de Medicis, with a view of tarnishing his fame, have attributed to him this brutal act of drowning the physician: and it might also happen, that Angelo Politianus, who was a partizan of the Medicis family, gave the relation he did, in order to defend the character of Peter from so black an imputation. We are often placed in this state of doubt and perplexity by history, and don't know who or what to rely on; and are equally in danger of being deceived by authors, whether they mislead us from motives of flattery or of hatred.

LXXIX. Some historians have said that Philip

lip the Second, caused his son Don Carlos to be strangled. Paul Piafechi, a bishop and senator of Poland, gives us to understand, that King Philip procured his son Don Carlos to be dispatched; but he speaks ambiguously, and does not explain whether this prince died of poison, or of grief at finding himself imprisoned. Saint Evremont writes, that the Spaniard who strangled Don Carlos, said to him at the time he was about it, *Have patience Sir, this is done for your good.* Nothing surely can have more the appearance of an invented falsehood than this cruel and barbarous irony. The Venetian senator, Andrew Morosini, says in his History of Venice, that Charles not having any instrument wherewith to kill himself, determined to starve himself to death; but not being suffered to do this by those who looked after him, he tried the expedient of swallowing the diamond of one of his rings; but this not having the desired effect, he was resolved to put an end to his life by one means or other; and betook himself to eating and drinking with excess, which brought on a dysentery that carried him off in a few days. Cabrera agrees with the Venetian senator; but the greatest part of historians insist, that his death was not voluntary, but directed by his father; to whom they attribute his saying, by way of justifying the act, that if he found he had any bad blood belonging to him, he had an undoubted right

right to let it out. It is much to be wondered at, that a circumstance of history which is of no greater antiquity, should be enveloped in such clouds and darkness. Charles ended his life on the 24th of July, 1568, at four in the morning, aged twenty-five years and fifteen days.

LXXX. Isabella of France, called the Princess of Peace, on account of that which accompanied her marriage with Philip the Second, died the third of October in the same year, and two months and ten days after Don Carlos. The Spanish historians attribute her death to a mistake of the physicians, who bled her when she was pregnant: ours, on the other hand, accuse her husband of being the author of it: and Mezeray speaks of the event in the following words: We are about to relate one of the most monstrous adventures imaginable; which is, that Philip the Second having come to understand that his only son Charles had held a correspondence with the confederated lords of the Low Countries, who were endeavouring to prevail upon him to come to Flanders, caused him to be imprisoned, and deprived of life, either by slow poison or strangling him; and that a little while afterwards, on account of some jealousy he entertained, he poisoned his wife, together with the infant in her womb; as was attested afterwards by her mother

ther queen Catherine, upon the authority of secret informations given to her by her daughter, and by the depositions of the domestics of that princess, after their arrival in France *.

LXXXI. Nothing can be blacker than the colours in which Buchanan paints the unfortunate Mary Queen of Scots, although other historians give her the character of a very perfect princess.

LXXXII. I shall insert here the judgment Montaigne makes, of a history written by William de Bellai, and of the memoirs of Martin de Bellai his brother. He says, " It can't be de-
 " nied that we perceive evidently in those au-
 " thors, a great neglect for that frankness and
 " sincerity of writing which is resplendent in our
 " ancient historians; such as Monsieur Joinville,
 " a domestic of Saint Louis; Eginard the chan-

* We read in many authors, the various opinions that prevailed with respect to the death of Don Carlos; but in very few, that Queen Isabel of France was poisoned by her husband Philip the Second; and her being with child at the same time he was said to have done it, is a circumstance that gives the tragedy an air of incredibility. We ought to conclude, in order to give this transaction a face of probability, that Philip the Second was a very barbarous prince: but as I have my doubts with respect to his deserving that character, I conjecture this was a calumny invented by the malice of some strangers.

" cellor

“ cellor to Charles the Great; and Philip of
 “ Comines, who is more modern. Their works
 “ are more properly a declamation in favour of
 “ king Francis, and against Charles the Fifth,
 “ than a history. I would not willingly believe
 “ they have altered any thing with respect to
 “ the material facts; but it looks as if they took
 “ pains to warp the judgment of the reader in
 “ favour of their own country, and as if they
 “ studiously omitted, to mention any thing that
 “ made against the reputation of their own mo-
 “ narch: and it is remarked by Montmorenci
 “ and Brion, that they never once mention Ma-
 “ dame d’Estampes *. They might omit to speak
 “ of private transactions, but their being silent
 “ upon things that became of consequence on
 “ account of the effect they had on public con-
 “ cerns, was an inexcusable fault; and, believe
 “ me, he who would attain a thorough know-
 “ ledge of the character of Francis, and the things
 “ which happened in his reign, should read
 “ other historians.”

* The mistress of Francis the First, both before and after
 marriage, and whose behaviour, with regard to her, gave scan-
 dal to all Europe.

Of good Criticism on History.

LXXXIII. We think it is now time, to have done treating of so inscrutable a matter as the contradictions of historians. In order to form something like a consistent judgment of suspicious histories, criticism should ascend to the first fountains, and perhaps the only ones from whence they were derived; for instance, to Marianus Scotus, for the story of Pope Joan; and to Gaguin, for the pretended erection of the kingdom of Yvetot. It is next necessary, to attend carefully to the time, in which the first bringer to light of an uncertain fact wrote, what profession he was of, what party he followed, and, above all, what was his character with regard to his adherence to or indifference for the truth; and also, whether in all his works he has preserved exactness and uniformity; and we should likewise attend to the consistency of the testimonies in support of a relation, which ought always to be mentioned. These precautions, might tend to lead us on to a knowledge of the truth of historical facts.

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The Benefit to be derived from the Study of History.

LXXXIV. The principal object in the reading of history, ought to be that of studying men, their characters, and geniuses. He who reads, says Montaigne, should not attend so much to the era of time in which Carthage was destroyed, as to the customs and manners of Hannibal and Scipio; nor so much to the knowing where Marcellus died, as why he acted unworthy of his duty and obligations, by exposing and losing his life for a trifling object. To study history, is to study the opinions, the motives, and passions of men; and the fruit of that study, should be learning to know yourself by the knowledge you acquire of others; to correct your failings by their examples; and to learn experience at their expence.

LXXXV. The obligations of an historian are, to instruct men by making them acquainted with the exact truth of events; because, if nothing more was necessary than to display sentiments, geniuses, and customs, novels and theatrical pieces would be equally opportune to answer that purpose as historical volumes. The author

of the novel of Sethos says justly in his preface, that feigned situations and circumstances are the best suited for exhibiting great examples; but observes likewise, that the display of characters and example, makes an incomparably greater impression, when it is blended, if not with an intire persuasion, with a probable opinion of the truth of the facts.

T H E
D I V O R C E
O F

HISTORY from FABLE.

S E C T. I.

I. **T**HE maxim, that a lie is always the child of something, has done great mischief in the world; because it authorizes fiction, attributing to it an illustrious birth, by supposing it to have been derived from, and nursed in the cradle of truth. Those who adopt this opinion, conjecture, that there is no error whatever which has not more or less mixture of reality in its composition, and that fable, is always built upon some solid historical fact.

II. Both reason and experience militate against this vulgar hypothesis; experience, because we

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every day see artful impositions, which owe their origin, solely to the malice of those who prefer them. What reason could the wife of Potiphar have, for attributing an infamous attempt to the chaste Joseph? What mixture of truth was there in the premeditated accusation, which the two old lechers preferred against the innocent Sufannah? but it is wasting time to repeat examples, which are daily presenting themselves to our eyes and ears.

III. If we consult reason, we shall be convinced, that he who can devise the one half of a fabulous tale, can easily invent the other half; for what more difficulty can there occur in the invention of the one, than the other part of it? or what necessity is there for his borrowing materials for a fable from a true event, who possesses a fertile mine of them in his own imagination? The logicians say, and they say right, that there are some entities of reason which have real foundations; and others, which have none. This maxim may be applied to fables; as there are many of them which are partly grounded on true facts; and many likewise, whose composition is all pure iron, in which, there is not the least mixture of either gold or silver.

S E C T. II.

IV. The idea, that a lie is always mixed with some truth from whence it was derived, is not only prevalent among the vulgar, but has also taken place in the imaginations of many learned men; who have extended the opinion to those truths and lies, which are the most different in themselves, and the most widely distant from each other; that is, to revealed truths, and the errors which are diametrically opposite to them. These pretend, that all the fables of gentilism, took their rise from events that are related in the scripture; and that these fables, are nothing else but sacred history altered and corrupted.

V. The erudition that has been expended in this endeavour, is immense; and there is no doubt, but the arduousness of the undertaking, requires great learning and reading, as it demands a knowledge of almost all the profane authors, in order to extract from their works all those circumstances, in which they shall find any allusion between the fables and the histories; and also a profound knowledge of the Oriental languages, for the purpose of deducing, either by means of the signification or etymology of the words,

the resemblance between the names of the heroes and deities of the Pagans, and those of the persons of the scripture. This is a task, that has been undertaken by men who were extremely learned and able; such as Bishop Huet, Father Tournemine, Samuel Bochart, Nicholas Butler, Heinsius, Vossius, and others. But their labours turned out to be all cultivating with great industry a foil, that was capable of producing nothing but flowers; I mean, that all the toils of these great men, served only to shew their ingenuity and erudition, but not to discover the truth.

VI. I well know this sentiment of mine stands in need of much support, on account of the great numbers of literary men who are votaries to the opinion, that in the fables of the Gentiles, are involved or disguised the truths of the scripture; finding then that I can have but little hopes of aid from authority, I must appeal to reason; but I consider myself to have so good a plea at this tribunal, that I have great expectations judgment will be pronounced in my favour by all such of my readers, as are divested of prejudice or preoccupation.

S E C T. III.

VII. The first thing that seems to have weight against this system, is the great opposition between the authors themselves who are the advocates for it, with regard to their application of the cases instanced by them; for in the same fable, in which one fancies he sees traces of one part of sacred history, another imagines he perceives those of a very different one. For example, Monsieur Huet conceives, that in the fabulous story of Hercules, is involved or disguised the history of Joshua; and Nicholas Butler finds in the same fable, the adventures of Adam. Monsieur Huet fancies, that Moses is described in the fable of Perseus; and Mr. Butler, in the same fable, discovers the history of Jonas. Is it not clearer than the sun at noon-day, that the adventures of Joshua and Adam, as likewise those of Moses and Jonas, which are so different in themselves, can only by the force of violent and strained allusions, be made in one fable, to be descriptive of Joshua and Adam, and in another, of Moses, and Jonas?

VIII. But the disagreement in what I am now about to mention, is much more enormous still.

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Monf. Huet, who, in the errors of paganism, fancies he discovers multiplied descriptions of Mofes, imagines, he fees this hero painted to the life in the fable of Prometheus ; and in the fame fable, Father Tournemine finds depicted the crime and punifhment of Lucifer. Such a ftriking contradiction, makes it manifef, that authors who employ themfelves in fuch undertakings, are not guided by any firm or permanent lights which are thrown on the objects of their fpeculations, but by fome falfe rays, which are furnifhed by their own imaginations.

S E C T. IV.

IX. But this matter will be better explained, by reducing the applications which the before-cited authors have made of the hiftory of Prometheus, to a comparative examination. And to begin with Father Tournemine ; he fancies it alludes to the crime and punifhment of Luzbel ; becaufe in the firft place, according to the relation of Duris of Samos, Prometheus was thrown down from heaven by Jupiter, for having pretended to be betrothed to Minerva. I don't know whether Duris of Samos, whose works are not at prefent in being, faid any fuch thing ; but if he did

did say it, it was as Natal Comite observes, a fable of his own inventing, and one that was not generally current among the Gentiles; as may be evinced, by examining the works of other profane authors; all of whom, almost universally agree, that Prometheus, having by the assistance of Minerva formed a man of clay, he by the favour of the same goddess, was enabled to ascend up to heaven, from whence he brought a portion of fire, with which he instill'd life into the statue he had formed; and that the punishment Jupiter inflicted on him for this sacrilegious theft, was chaining him to a rock of Mount Caucasus, and placing a vulture at his breast, which should continually gnaw his entrails. It is clear, this fable is not capable of any application whatever to the history of Luzbel; and much less can it be made to apply to it, if we add the remainder of the story, which is, that Hercules rescued him from the punishment, by first killing the vulture with arrows, and afterwards unchaining Prometheus; but the punishment of Luzbel is eternal, and not transitory.

X. The second application of Father Tour-nemine consists, in that, according to other authors, the crime of Prometheus was envying his brother Epimetheus; which may very well be made

made to apply to Luzbel, by supposing that in Epimetheus is represented the person of Adam; for Luzbel, when he was thrown down from heaven on account of the envy he bore to the happiness of man, excited or provoked his fall. But neither does Father Tournemine point out the authors who attribute this sin of envy to Prometheus, nor have I been able to discover one who has said any such thing; but it rather appears to me, that Epimetheus had much to envy in Prometheus, although this last had little to envy in him, because Prometheus is described as exceedingly penetrating and sensible, and Epimetheus as rude and stupid. Neither could any motive of envy arise from the marriage, which, according to some mythologists, took place between Pandora and him, because she was sent by Jupiter with the fatal box, in which was shut up or contained all sorts of calamities, and which she was to endeavour to prevail on Prometheus to open; this Jupiter, in order to be revenged on him, was desirous he should do; but Prometheus, like a wise man, withstood the intreaty; Epimetheus, on the contrary, was weak enough to entertain Pandora, and open the box, in consequence of which he filled himself with misfortunes. This transaction afforded rather motives of pity than envy; neither could

could Prometheus envy his brother the possession of Pandora, whom he had rejected.

XI. Father Tournemine, in his third application, says; that, according to other authors, Prometheus sinned, by suggesting to Epimetheus through Pandora, that he should open the box, which quadrates very opportunely with Luzbel's tempting of Adam through Eve. I have never as yet met with any author who has mentioned such a suggestion; but on the contrary, have seen some, who say, that Prometheus warned Epimetheus against receiving any present which should be sent him from Jupiter.

XII. In his fourth application he observes, that according to the most general received opinion, the crime of Prometheus, was bringing the fire from heaven to earth, with which he instilled into man the passions that stimulated him to vice; and this corresponds with what Luzbel did, by inflaming with his persuasions, the keen appetite of Adam. It is certain, that the most common and generally received opinion is, that the crime of Prometheus consisted in his stealing the celestial fire; as it is also, that the use he purposed to make of this fire, was to animate with it the statue of clay, and not to instil into the statue the passions of man after it was animated.

XIII.

XIII. In his fifth and last application, he tells us, the Poet Nicander says, that Jupiter having granted to man the blessing of eternal youth, he by the advice of Prometheus, sold it to the serpent; in which is insinuated, that Luzbel, by his temptation, was the cause of the death of Adam and all his descendents. I don't know what Nicander, whose works I am not acquainted with but by quotation, says upon the subject; but I know, that in a matter of this sort, the fiction of a particular poet should not, nor ought it to be urged, in opposition to the common and general received opinion of the mythologists, who attribute all the misfortunes of man, to the fatal box in which they were contained, and among which, were those of diseases. To this we may add, that Mons. Huet, who quotes the same Nicander, tells the story very differently. He says, that man having received from the hands of Jupiter the gift of perpetual youth, laid it on the loins of an ass, which ass came thirsty to a fountain that was guarded by a serpent, who prevented him from drinking; but he agreed to give the serpent what he carried on his back, provided he would permit him to quench his thirst; the bargain being made, the ass obtained the water, and surrendered to the serpent perpetual youth. According to this relation, there is no sale on the

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part of the man, nor does there appear any persuasion on the part of Prometheus; but the whole blame is laid upon the ass.

S E C T. V.

XIV. We will now proceed to the applications of the illustrious Huet, which are made in two ways, some directly, others indirectly. I call those to be made directly, in which he proposes some immediate likeness between Moses and Prometheus; and I look upon those as indirect, in which he seeks for the likeness, by introducing some third agent or property. For example, Mons. Huet pretends, and by the assistance of certain analogies, endeavours to prove, that Prometheus and Mercury are one and the same person; and afterwards strives to demonstrate by other analogies, that Mercury and Moses are the same. This kind of proof is very frequently introduced by Mons. Huet, who, by pursuing the system of confounding all, or very nearly all the heathen deities in one, whatever similitude he finds to Moses in any one of them, he applies to identify the persons of every one of the others. But as in our progress, we mean expressly to dispute and arraign this system, we shall confine ourselves for
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the present, to the direct applications which are made by this author of the history of Prometheus to that of Moses.

XV. In his first application, he begins by saying, that Herodotus calls Prometheus the husband of Asia, and that others call him the son. Moses was of Asiatic extraction, and all the Israelitish people when they returned from Egypt, came back with him into Asia. (Demonstr. Evang. prop. 4. cap. 8. numb. 7.) I have used the very words of the author in this quotation, that no one should think, I was guilty of the least imposition, in stating this strained and violent application. It is really astonishing, to see a man celebrated in the Republic of Letters, apply so trifling an allusion to so serious a business. Who does not perceive, that according to this mode of reasoning, Prometheus may be made to resemble every man who was born in Asia? and with more propriety than he could be likened to Moses? for he was not born in Asia, but in Africa, and was only of Asiatic descent. Besides this, what Herodotus says of Prometheus, his being the husband of Asia, and others that he was the son, should not be understood to allude to that vast extent of country, which is reputed one of the four quarters of the world, but to the nymph Asia, who the poets feigned

feigned to have been the daughter of Thetis and the Ocean, and from whom, it is said, that prodigious tract of land derived its name.

XVI. This second application begins thus: In the opinion of some authors, Prometheus was the brother of Deucalion, of whom Apollonius speaking, says, that he was the first who erected temples to the gods. This he thinks applies to Aaron, the brother of Moses, who was the first high priest of the Israelites. But this application is more extraordinary than the other; because, in order to adopt it, the illustrious Huet falls into two gross contradictions. The first is, that a little lower down, for the sake of another application, he supposes Deucalion not to be the brother, but the son of Prometheus; and this coincides with the general opinion; at least I have never seen any other adopted by any author whatever. The second contradiction is, that in the tenth chapter he affirms, and endeavours to prove, that Deucalion and Aaron mean the same person. But how can Deucalion and Aaron be supposed to mean the same person, when the character and description of Aaron, differ so widely from that of Noah? Who could imagine, that so learned a man could fall into such an absurdity? and it would be idle to insist, that the building of tem-

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ples was peculiarly annexed to the office of high priests, as many more temples have been built by legitimate princes, than by high priests.

XVII. In his third application, he observes, that Diodorus says, Prometheus reigned in a part of Egypt. Moses was the leader or prince of the Hebrews, who inhabited a portion of Egypt, that is, the land of Gessen. Besides this, Thermutis, the daughter of Pharaoh, who adopted him for her son, destined him to reign over her paternal inheritance. This application, in the first place, proceeds upon a false supposition, because Moses, was neither king or prince of the Israelites during their abode in Egypt, nor can it be said with any propriety, that he ruled over any part of Egypt; as the contrary clearly appears from scripture. The second application is a strained one, because being destined to a kingdom, and enjoying it, are things as different, as possession and expectation. And besides all this, the scripture does not say one word of the destination of Moses to the crown of Egypt. It is Josephus only who relates it, and who, with respect to a matter of such remote antiquity, it is not credible should have been able to obtain any authentic instrument wherewith to corroborate his assertion.

XVIII.

XVIII. In the fourth application, he says that Prometheus found himself in great distress, on account of an exorbitant inundation of the Nile, which overflowed all the lands of his dominions; and that Hercules freed him from the difficulty. In this event, Monsieur Huet figures to himself the passage of the Israelites through, and the drowning of the Egyptians in the Red Sea; but to make the allusion probable, he supposes Joshua, the military leader of the Israelites, and the constant companion of Moses and Hercules, to be one and the same person. The whole of this application goes lame. The making the Nile the Red Sea is a voluntary transformation; and this last must be supposed to have broke through a large tract of country, and to have inundated the land of Egypt; which is a circumstance that never happened. The ruin that was brought upon the Egyptians by the Red Sea, was so far from giving Moses anxiety, that it put him in safety. How then could the distresses of Prometheus, be made to apply to Moses? Joshua in no shape assisted Moses in the passage of the Red Sea? What relation then can the assistance which Hercules afforded to Prometheus bear to Joshua?

XIX. In the fifth application, he remarks, that the statues of Prometheus are carved holding a

sceptre in the right hand, and that this alludes to the miraculous rod or wand of Moses. This puerile mode of straining for allusions, is terrible, and especially, when men descend to deduce them from such trifling and impertinent circumstances. At this rate, all the statues of princes with a sceptre in the right hand, are emblems of Moses; and by the same mode of reasoning, may be called so many statues of him. If Monsieur Huet was of opinion, that Prometheus was a king, why should he seek for any other symbol or figure of it, than his being carved with a sceptre in his hand, which is the proper and natural one; and is intended as an emblem of regal authority? Finally, the resemblance between a sceptre and a wand is so trifling, that we need not take the trouble of dwelling upon, or attending to other particulars, this alone being sufficient to reprobate the application.

XX. In his sixth application, he takes notice that Julius Africanus says, that the fable of Prometheus having formed a man, took its rise from his having by wise instructions, made those men penetrating and polished, who were before rustic and stupid. By giving this turn to, and viewing things in this light, we may, with more propriety, compare or indentify Moses with Romulus,
 Numa

Numa Pompilius, Minos, Draco, Solon, Lycurgus, and the whole Arcopagus.

XXI. In the seventh application, he tells us, that Prometheus held conversations with Jupiter; and that Moses held them with God. I have read in the scripture, of the conversation of Moses with God; but I never in any author, read of those of Prometheus with Jupiter. But granting there were such, Jupiter is said to have conversed with many other mortals; and, according to this mode of reasoning, it should follow, that all those were so many Moseses. Truly, with respect to the frequency of conversations with Jupiter, I would bet Ganymede against Prometheus, and indeed against all others whatever.

XXII. In his eighth application, he tells us, that in a tragedy of Æschylus, Prometheus is introduced saying, that he was the inventor of divining by the inspection of the entrails of victims. Moses regulated all the forms of worship, and the rights of sacrifices practised by the Israelites. What analogy is there between these two things? Between offering victims to false deities, in order to divine by their entrails, and sacrificing to the true God, there is as great a difference, as there is between due worship and superstition. Besides, what stress should be laid upon what a

poet, and a Greek one too, says in a theatrical piece? Don't we know that fictions are essentially material to poems; and especially to those of this kind, as are likewise particular feigned incidents, whether the subject of the piece is taken from true events or common fables? The text of a tragedy, therefore, should never be quoted as authority, when the matter in question is an enquiry into truth.

XXIII. In the ninth application, he observes, that Prometheus is spoken of in a dialogue of Lucian, as one who knew future events. Moses was a prophet. The dialogues of Lucian may, without doubt, be as properly quoted in a matter of this sort, as the tragedy of *Æschylus*. No one is ignorant that Lucian in his dialogues, gives full scope and play to his imagination; and introduces into them, all the pleasing fictions that occur to him; and especially those, which are conducive to turning into ridicule the deities of Paganism. But I will admit, that the ancients held Prometheus as a soothsayer: this being however a quality they acknowledged in an infinite number of others, either all those had a right to be called the representatives of Moses, or none of them had; although there is no more reason for identifying Prometheus with Moses on this account, than there is for comparing him with all the

the other prophets that are mentioned in holy writ.

XXIV. In the tenth application, he says, the fire which Prometheus brought from Heaven, may allude to the lightning mixed with hail, which Moses caused to descend from Heaven to terrify the Egyptians, to the fire with which he consumed two hundred and fifty seditious of those who rebelled at Coré, to the fire of the bush, to the celestial splendid rays on Mount Sinai, when Moses spoke with God, to the refulgent glare of the face of Moses when he came down from the mount, or the perpetual fire which God ordained should ever burn on the altar. Allusions between history and fable are very easy to be met with, if finding the word fire in each of them, is sufficient to establish the similitude, without having regard to union or conformity with respect to any other circumstance whatever. At this rate, all that we find written of water in fabulous histories, may be made applicable to all that is said of water in the scripture.

XXV. In the eleventh application, he observes, that Jupiter sent Pandora to Prometheus, to deceive him; but he, knowing the design, would not receive her. In the character of Pandora is represented that of Eve, whose history was written

by Moses, although he abominated her crime. Let the reader now reflect, what relation the writer of an event bears to an actor in it.

XXVI. He says, in the twelfth application, that Jupiter, because the men had revealed to him the theft of Prometheus, granted them the boon of perpetual youth; and observes, that this alludes to the privilege which God conceded to the Israelites, that their cloaths should not wear out in the desert. Such conceits ought more properly to be termed illusions than allusions; and as the extravagance of them is self-evident, I shall not waste time in exploding them.

In the thirteenth application, he says, that Jupiter chained Prometheus to a rock, in a cave of Mount Caucasus, and appointed a vulture to gnaw his entrails. God placed Moses in a cavern of Mount Sinai, in order to manifest his glory to him there. This confounding of Mount Caucasus with Mount Sinai, and a delinquent abhorred by Jupiter, with a just man beloved by God, is a strange mode of making applications; as is, to compleat the whole, comparing the most cruel torment of a continual gnawing of the entrails, to the greatest blessing that ever was enjoyed by a mortal.

XXVIII.

XXVIII. In the last application, he says, Hercules relieved Prometheus from that punishment. This circumstance, Monsieur Huet is desirous of making allude to Joshua, whom he supposes to have been meant by Hercules; and also to the battle Joshua fought with the Amalakites, in the midst of which, Moses was on the top of an adjacent hill, with his hands lifted up to Heaven, and imploring success to the Israelites till such time as they obtained the victory; and he likens the delivery of Moses, whom he supposes to have been in a sort of imprisonment on the mount, to that of Prometheus. This is all a compound of incoherences and contradiction; for, in order to accommodate the application to the circumstances, he compares the confinement of Prometheus in the cavern of Mount Caucasus, to the situation of Moses in the cave of Mount Sinai, and to his situation on the Hill of Amalec. The fable of Prometheus, supposes no battle of Hercules with any nation whatever. Finally, and not to dwell upon many other objections, this application of the fable, is contradictory to the whole tenor of history; as, according to the fable, Moses the benefactor of Joshua, should be considered as the person on whom the benefit was conferred. When Moses lifted his hands to Heaven, then Joshua conquered; so that the success of Joshua depended on the action of

of Moses. How then can you reconcile this with the fable, where Hercules, who is the representative of Joshua, confers all the favour; and Prometheus, who is supposed to mean Moses, does no act whatever, but is a mere passive agent who receives favours.

S E C T. VI.

XXIX. I believe, that with these examples, I have evinced to the reader, that the attempting to discover the truths of the scripture in the errors of gentilism, is a chimerical undertaking. The two before-quoted authors, abounded as much as any others whatever in learning and ingenuity. Notwithstanding this, they, by applying these talents with the greatest exertion possible to this undertaking, could attain nothing by their labours, but some applications that were so forced and violent, that they seemed as if they were dragged in by the hair of the head; which, together with their being partly founded on uncertain suppositions, proclaims the ill success of the endeavours of those authors. I am persuaded, that by permitting premises to be drawn from such flimsy allusions as those I have enumerated, there is no man of middling capacity, who would not be able to make any sort of fable the symbol of any

any sort of history, and every sort of profane tale, to resemble canonical relation, as this is what we see practised every day from the pulpits. Every preacher of but ordinary ingenuity, and moderate erudition, likens the saint of whom he is preaching, to some one or other of the scripture heroes; availing himself of versions, glosses, and comments, to multiply the allusions, in the same manner, that Monsieur Huet avails himself of the various expressions of particular authors. By using such sort of means, it is easy to find out, or pretend to find out, the vestiges of sacred history in the fables of paganism, and indeed it is every day's practice. He must be but a heavy preacher, who, if he is desirous of doing it, can't among the festivals of the Gentiles, find out some one or other, from the circumstances of which, may not be drawn various particulars, applicable to the solemnity which is the subject of his discourses; and, without doubt, a man of ingenuity, may be happy enough to hit upon some, that are more opportune, than those we have seen made use of by the illustrious Huet; but we should not from hence conclude, nor do the preachers themselves draw any such inference, that God, at the time he permitted these things to be done, and was offended with those superstitious practices, intended by some occult Providence, that they should be types of Christian solemnities.

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S E C T. VII.

XXX. The illustrious Huet, is not more happy in the other parts of his undertaking, than in those we have given the examples of; but to go thro' them all, would be very tedious, as the scope of his plan, comprehends nearly the whole group of the fabulous gods and heroes, who he pretends, were all descriptive of, and meant one and the same person, which was Moses. I have said gods and heroes, because he reserved the goddesses and the heroines, to be the representatives of Moses's wife Zephora, and his sister Maria. A magnificent system this truly, if it can be supported; but its own magnitude exposes its weakness, and it fares with it as it does with great buildings, which the bigger they are, if they are built upon slender foundations, the sooner they fall to the ground.

XXXI. It not being practicable then, to combat the assertions of Monsieur Huet one by one, and in detail, I shall attack the main body and substance of his system, which I flatter myself I shall do with such solid arguments, as will go near to divest it of every appearance of probability.

XXXII.

XXXII. To this end, I shall begin with supposing, that idolatry commenced long before Moses was born, and that it was pretty generally extended in the world, before he could possibly have been the object of it: this is evident from many parts of holy writ. In the book of Joshua, chapter the 24th, it is expressly affirmed, that Terah the father, and Nachor the brother of Abraham, were idolaters; and these were antecedent to Moses more than four generations. The idols of Laban also, which the scripture takes notice of in the 31st chapter of Genesis, were greatly prior to Moses; and the idol Moloch, was worshiped by some nations a long time before the days of Moses, as we learn from the 18th chapter of Leviticus.

XXXIII. Idolatry likewise, while Moses was living, was very frequent and common. It is evident that it prevailed in Egypt at that period; because Moses, when he was speaking to Pharaoh, called the true God the God of the Hebrews; from whence it may be inferred, that Pharaoh and the Egyptians did not know him for such. He likewise told him, that there was no God like his God. It is probable that the golden calf which the Israelites worshiped in the desert, was an imitation of the ox, which, under the
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name of Apis, was worshiped by the Egyptians, and from thence, they most probably derived the superstition.

XXXIV. That idolatry at that time had also extended itself into many other nations, is an established fact. Moloch was worshiped by the Ammonites. The Moabites were idolaters; and the women of that region perverted the Israelites, and drew them to the worship of their false gods; as appears by the 25th chapter of Numbers; and the 7th chapter of Deuteronomy, makes mention of seven other idolatrous nations.

XXXV. This is what clearly appears from scripture; and there are well-founded probabilities, that not only in the nations beforementioned, but even in all others, (although the scripture, on account of their history not being connected with that of the Israelites, does not mention them) idolatry in the days of Moses, was radically established: first, because the expressions the God of the Hebrews, and the God of Israel, which so frequently occur in the scripture, indicate, that the Israelites were the only people, who knew and worshiped the true God: secondly, because it does not seem likely, that if in those days there had been any other people who were faithful to their maker, that the Di-

vine Providence would not have contrived some means, to have had their memories handed down to us, either by the pen of Moses, or that of some other canonical writer; and also, some account of such men who had flourished among them, as were eminent for their virtue: thirdly, because, if in the nations who bordered on the Israelites, who saw their worship, and were witnesses of the wonders God wrought in their favour, the light of the true religion did not shine forth, how is it credible that it should have prevailed in the distant ones?

XXXVI. Supposing then, that idolatry in the days of Moses, prevailed in all, or the greatest part of the nations in the world, this supposition gives great force to my argument against the system of the illustrious Huet; for it is totally incredible, that all the idolatrous nations, as if they did it by common consent, should at once forsake their antient errors, for the purpose of forming another new system of false religion, the object of which, was the adoration of Moses: the conclusion then, that all the idols of the Gentiles were designed to represent Moses, is a false one. I shall adduce in support of this assertion, the following arguments: this change of worship, if it had ever taken place, would without doubt, have begun with the nations next adjoining

ing to the Israelites, because these were the first who must have known of, or experienced the wonders that were wrought by Moses, and from these nations, together with the information of the wonders, the new idolatry must have passed to the distant ones; but I say it is incredible, that this change should ever have taken place in the neighbouring nations; because these, together with their knowing of the wonders that were wrought by Moses, must have also been acquainted with the principles of the religion of the Hebrews; and must have known likewise, that the Hebrews did not worship Moses as a deity; but that both Moses and they worshiped an invisible God, in whose name, and by whose supreme power, the prodigies were performed; and that, in the execution of them, Moses acted as a mere instrument: it follows then, that in case these wonders had made such an impression on their minds as to induce them to change their religion, they would unquestionably have embraced that professed by Moses and the Hebrews; and not have adopted for a deity, a man who they knew was a mere instrument in the hands of the true God.

XXXVII. We will illustrate the force of this argument in the instance of the Egyptians. They saw the wondrous things that were executed by
Moses;

Moses; did this incline them to acknowledge him for a deity, and to worship him as such? Clearly no, for they were told by Moses himself and the rest of the Hebrews, that these wonders were wrought under the conduct and authority, and by the order of one great God, whom Moses and all his followers worshiped, and whom they called the God of all Mankind; and at times, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who were the predecessors of Moses: in case then, that, excited by these portentous things, they should have been disposed to change their religion, they would certainly have embraced that of the Hebrews, and have worshiped the true God; and not Moses, who was his minister and instrument, and whom they saw, that even those who considered him as their leader and protector, did not recognize as a deity.

XXXVIII. Admitting then that it is not probable the nations adjoining to the Hebrews, should adopt Moses for the object of their worship, it is by no means likely the distant ones should do it, because the information leading to produce such an event, must have been communicated from the first to the last; and of course, if in consequence of the accounts they received of the wonders that were performed by Moses, and the means by which he wrought them, they should

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have been induced to change their religion, it would not have been to worship Moses, but the God of Moses, for that is the resolution the intelligencethey had received, would have induced them to take.

XXXIX. To this argument, which in my judgment is invincible, I shall add another, which seems to me to have equal weight, which is, that in not one of all the idolatrous nations of the world, has the name of Moses been preserved, as a person who was worshiped as a deity; it is not likely then, that any of them ever venerated him as such. This opinion can't be controverted, because there is no mention of the religion of any people whatever, either to be found in books or carved on marble, in which the name of Moses, with the signification of a deity, is to be traced or met with. The conclusion to be deduced from hence with moral certainty, is, that if all the nations at any period of time, had concurred in worshipping Moses, it is next to an impossibility, that some one or other of them should not have preserved the remembrance of his name. How is it credible, that among all the nations of the world, who consisted of such vast numbers of people, and who were all unanimous in paying adoration to Moses, as Mons. Huet pretends, his name should be quite done away, without a single exception of its being preserved in any of them? Mankind
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in general, have been observed to be very steady in preserving the names of their deities; nor can it be otherwise, because they are always fresh in the memories, and at the tongue's end of all the individuals of every nation. Thus we see, that from the days of Hesiod and Homer, till the extinction of paganism, a space of time, which, according to the antiquity that is given to Homer by the Arundel marbles, amounted to twelve centuries, the same identical names of their false deities continued to be preserved among the Greeks, such as Jupiter, Juno, Diana, &c. It is then absolutely exceeding the bounds of all probability, to suppose, that in some one or more of the idolatrous nations, or even in the greatest part of them, the name of Moses should not have been preserved, provided he had ever been the divinity they all adored.

XL. We may conclude then that the system of the illustrious Huet is totally improbable; and that the connexion and resemblance which he fancied to have discerned between the errors of gentilism and scripture truths, existed no where but in his own imagination.

XLI. The last argument we have urged against Monsieur Huet, militates with equal force against all other authors, who have in different ways engaged in the same undertaking, as against him;

it being certain, that in none of the fables of paganism, can there be found any of the scripture proper names; and although some have pretended to meet here and there one, besides the visible distinction there is between the words, we may with very little reflection, perceive the signification of them is quite different: for example, the word *Evoe*, repeated in the Festivals of Bacchus, is pretended by Mr. Butler, to have been used in remembrance of our first mother Eve: but the commentators upon Plautus, Virgil, and Ovid, consider this word when it occurs in the works of those poets, as an interjection, which is expressive of nothing more, than the affection or esteem of him who pronounces it. The Latin and Greek dictionaries agree in this definition, and give it the following signification: *Bene sit illi*.

XLII. I confess, that in here and there a fable, we may meet with an opportune application or allusion to historical truth; but this in no wise proves, that the history gave rise to the fable. Accident of itself, is capable of producing these coinciding circumstances. Because something happens to a man to-day, which he dreamed of the night before, no prudent person would infer from thence that there was any connection between the dream and the event. Among the
variety

variety of images which the fancy forms in dreams, it is next to impossible, that a part of them should not coincide with some realities; and we may say the same of voluntary fictions. It would be a striking wonder, if among the multitude of extravagances and errors common to the Gentiles, some one or other of them should not bear a lively analogy to here and there a revealed truth.

XLIII. It is true, that although this coincidence may be purely casual, it is possible, that it may also be relative, or have some connexion. I mean that it is possible, here and there a portion of sacred history, either as the malice or ignorance of men took away from, or added circumstances to it, might have degenerated by little and little from its purity, and might ultimately have been involved or obscured in some of the heathen fables. It is probable, that in the first book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, is contained disguised or disfigured, part of what Moses wrote in the first chapters of *Genesis* respecting the creation, the criminal outrages committed by those the scripture calls Giants, the universal corruption of mankind, and the deluge. But the supposing, that here and there a fable may have been derived from holy writ, is not the same, as deducing

from thence the derivation of a general system, which applies to all the errors of paganism; and even with respect to those few fables which bear a similitude to the scripture, we should suppose the derivation as probable, and not as certain, for the reason we have already hinted, which is, that the likeness of the error to truth may have been casual.

XLIV. By adopting this conduct, and pursuing this prudent middle way, we should avoid deriving all the fables from sacred history, and not incline to the particular system of Senior Branchini, a learned modern Italian, who attempted deducing them all from profane story. This author is of opinion, that all the relations of heroes and deities contained in the antient monuments, which were calculated to transmit to posterity the memories of such men, as in the early times had particularly distinguished themselves, and had become eminent by various ways; I say Senior Branchini conjectures, that these testimonies of the actions of those men, having fallen into the hands of poets, flatterers, their passionate admirers, or their own immediate descendants; the first in consequence of their profession, the second excited by their interest, the third by their affection, and the last by their vanity, ornamented them

them with many fabulous circumstances ; and from this complication of lies and truth, was derived all the theology of paganism.

XLV. There is no doubt, but it has been very common for men to deify one another, from all, or each of those four motives. The poets did it above two thousand five hundred years ago, and have not yet got the better of the bad habit ; for there is not a fine woman at this day, whom their pens don't elevate to the rank of a goddess. The flatterers made deities of those, who, on account of their vices, were unworthy to be called men, as is evident from the apotheosis of the Roman emperors ; and the vanity of descendants, deified their illustrious ancestors, by attributing a divine origin to the founders of many empires and republics. The Romans, not content with feigning the god Mars to have been the father of their first prince Romulus, raised Romulus himself to the rank of a divinity, and made him their tutelar deity.

XLVI. From the passion of love, was derived the most ancient propensity to deify mortals ; for the book of Ecclesiastes, chap. 14, points this out as the first principle or source, from whence this species of idolatry sprang. A father extremely afflicted for the loss of his son, snatched away in

the flower of his youth, to express his great tenderness and affection for him, causes his statue to be carved ; and this tenderness and affection, being afterwards extended to the utmost limits of human feeling, disturbs his understanding, and causes him so far to forget himself, as to make the image the object of his adoration. His authority and example, extends the superstition to his domestics ; from them it is communicated to all the inhabitants of a town, and from the inhabitants of that town to those of a whole region. There was seen many ages after this delirium commenced, an intention of repeating it, from the influence of the same passion, by one of the greatest men of antiquity. Cicero, that very Cicero, who at one time was the oracle of the Romans, and afterwards the admiration of succeeding ages, so far lost himself upon the death of his most beloved daughter Tullia, as to persist for a long while, in a determination of erecting altars to her as a deity. He also transmitted to posterity in his writings, testimonies, of his having once entertained so extravagant and mad a resolution.

XLVII. This impious and ridiculous folly was carried to the most shameless length by the emperor Adrian ; who built temples, raised altars, constituted priests, festivals, and sacrifices, to whom ?

whom? Why, to a boy of Bythinia named Antonio, the accomplice of his abominable turpitudes, who as some say was drowned by accident in the Nile, and as others tell the story, he of his own free will offered up his life in a magic sacrifice, which was made to prolong that of the emperor, and which according to the rites and ceremonies appertaining to it, required a voluntary victim.

XLVIII. But although it may be true, that the human affections of love, vanity, and interest, assisted by the fictions of the poets, have been the cause of deifying many men, still the system of Senior Branchini cannot subsist in its general and extended sense, for the following reasons. In the first place, because of the total exclusion it makes of all sacred history, which, as we have already said, some poets might have adulterated, in the same manner, and by the same means, they adulterated profane ones. Secondly, because some of the fictions might have been pure fictions, or mere fables, unmixed or unconnected with any history whatever. Who can prevent a cunning artful man, that travels into a remote region, from relating prodigies of some hero of his own country, who never existed? and who afterwards could be answerable, that the people of the country where he had spread the lie, should not adopt this

this imaginary hero as a divinity? Thirdly, as a great portion of the gentiles worshiped stars or planets, which they believed were animated, it is probable, that many of their fictions alluded to no other object but them. For example, when the adoration of the sun became an established worship, they might, and it is natural that they should feign, that the deity who animated it, had done such and such things, which bore no relation to any man or circumstance whatever, but only to the imaginary spirit.

XLIX. Lastly, the greatest part of the fables of the Gentiles, may have had no other origin, than some mystical, moral, political, or philosophical figure or representation, which their authors calculated them to illustrate or inculcate. I mean that those who contrived and fabricated them, had no other intention, than to represent obscurely, and under the veil of fables, some theological mysteries, or some philosophical, political, or moral maxims; but that afterwards, the ignorance of the vulgar, by mistaking their intent and meaning, and by construing and understanding them in a literal sense, came to form out of them, a ridiculous theology and religion, which never entered the heads of those who were the original authors of them. It is well known, the Egyptians under hieroglyphicks,

phicks, concealed not only their religion, but even their history, policy, and philosophy, which were only laid open or explained to their kings, and priests of the Sun. It is probable that in imitation of the Egyptians, who in those days were venerated as the most learned people in the world, many other nations adopted the same practice; and it is also possible that the Egyptians themselves, might have derived this custom from some other nation, who at one time might have been superior to them in wisdom and learning; and it is likewise possible, that this might have been a common practice in early antiquity. It is certain, that there are vast numbers of the pagan fables, which are capable of bearing a much more apt and commodious application to their physics, their morals, and their policy, than to their history. Read the treatise of the famous Bacon *de sapientia veterum*, who, by pursuing this idea, has been very happy in his explanation of not a few of those fables.

L. Thus we perceive, this is a matter capable of affording innumerable conjectures; but not a basis, solid enough to build any general system upon; which is the point we have chiefly endeavoured to demonstrate in this discourse; and particularly, with respect to the union or connexion

204 THE DIVORCE OF HISTORY, &c.

nexion of fable with history ; and more especially with sacred history ; which differs as much, and is as widely distant from the errors of paganism, as the greatest truth is from the greatest lie.

THE

T H E
O R I G I N O F F A B L E
I N
H I S T O R Y.

In a Letter from FEYJOE, to a Correspondent,
in Answer to one censuring the foregoing
Discourse.

I. DEAR SIR,

MY esteem for your person, induces me to respect your letter; but if I was not restrained by the first of these considerations, I don't know how I might be disposed to treat the epistle; because the charge you alledge against me in it, is destitute of all foundation. You first of all point-blank accuse me, with having in my essay on the *Divorce of History from Fable*, advanced, there is no fiction whatever of paganism, which is derived from sacred history; and then treat the maxim as favouring of impiety. But if broaching this maxim was criminal and a sin, alas! what must become of the honour and piety, of the most learned, and most religious abbot Branchini? for he
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was the man who first advanced, and afterwards with all his might, endeavoured to enforce and establish this system, and asserted, that all the fables of the pagans, were founded on, and derived from profane history. But why does this sentiment favour of impiety? You answer this, and say, because it takes away a species of support from the truth of holy writ. This can hardly be esteemed a very substantial species of support. Whoever would be inclined to doubt or disbelieve the scripture truths, notwithstanding the firm foundation on which they rest, would not be disposed to credit them, on account of the weak auxiliary confirmation they derive from such a support? That the origin of the fables of the Gentiles, were derived from those truths, is at best but a doubtful, and a speculative opinion; and how can a doubtful proof confirm any man in the belief of a matter, which rests, or is founded in that sort of proof? But if a fair proof of this could be adduced, it would answer no purpose, for it would be very easy for him who was guilty of the impiety, in order to elude any consequences from the detection, to pretend he derived the hint from another fable, and that these tales are the children of one another, and that those of the latest date, are introduced to ornament and give lustre to those which preceded them.

II. But admitting that the maxim did border upon impiety, I am by no means interested in defending

fending or justifying it, as I was in no wise concerned in preferring it, and therefore it is very unjust in you to impute it to me. My object in the discourse you mention, was that of combating the system, which derives all the fictions of gentilism in general, from sacred history ; although as is evident from my words in the 43d article of that Discourse, I admit that some of them might possibly have sprung from that source, how then can you when these were my words, fix a charge upon me of affirming, that no fiction whatever of paganism, took its rise from sacred history ?

III. I also combat, although it is only by the way, or *en passant*, the system of Senior Branchini, who asserts, that all the fables were the offspring of profane history ; or, to speak more properly, he endeavours to inculcate, that the first are mysterious or enigmatical representations of the last, which attempt, necessarily betrays him into some violent and absurd allusions ; and perhaps into such as are more glaring, than those I have pointed out, by which, he derives all the fables from holy writ. For example ; he pretends that all the Iliad is a true history, but converted into allegory, agreeable to the practice of the East. That Jupiter was the successor of the great conqueror Sesostris, whose dominion extended over a vast tract of country in the time of the Trojan war ; that the inferior deities, represented either eminent men,
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or particular nations; and that a part of those deities, were tributary princes to the said Sesostris, or some one of his successors, whose dependence upon him, did not deprive them of the option, of taking part either with the Trojans or the Greeks, just as their passions or interests dictated to them. That the goddess Juno was Syria, called *Blanca*, and was characterized by the white arms of Juno, so much extolled by Homer. Minerva was the wife Egypt, Mars the union or combination of Armenia, Colquida, Thrace and Theffaly; and in this manner, he reasons upon the other fables. Into such strange paradoxes as these, are men drawn by their passion for systems of great extent.

IV. But although I don't assent to the system of Senior Branchini, the whole of which it is impossible to adjust, without falling into great absurdities, I agree, after the example of many men eminent for their literature, that a large portion of the fables, is a compound of parcels of profane history, disguised and deformed; but still the alteration they have undergone, has not so thoroughly disfigured them, but that we may discern in the copies, sufficient marks of their origin and derivation; and I propose pointing out to you in this letter, the instances of this sort that occur to me.

V. It

V. It is highly probable, that some of the subaltern deities, were formed upon the idea that was entertained by the populace, of some particular persons, eminent either for their heroic virtues, or for having been the inventors of some arts, that were found to be exceedingly useful to the public. This is the account Pliny gives of the matter in chap. 1. of his twenty-fifth book. *At herculè, singula quosdam inventa deorum numero addidere.*

VI. Saturn devouring his children, according to Mr. Rollin, is derived from a part of the Carthaginian history, which speaks of a king of Carthage, who buried his sons alive as a sacrifice to the gods; and this agrees in substance, with the account given of the thing by Mons. Bonamy, in his History of the Royal Academy of Inscriptions, tom. 7. p. 29. But, as we shall see in the sequel, it is much more probable, that the fabulous Saturn of paganism was derived from the true Abraham of scripture.

VII. The Cretans considered Jupiter as their countryman; and even in the time of Lucian, as appears by this author in his Dialogue of *Jupiter Tragicus*, shewed his tomb in that island; and although they allowed he was dead, it without doubt had been handed down to them by tradition,

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that

that he was some eminent man, and had peradventure been king of the country.

VIII.. In the fiction of the Stygian Lake, and of the boatman Charon, is contained a mixture of natural and civil history. There is in Arcadia a lake, which not only was called Stygia at the time when the poets first began to make it famous by their inventions, but many ages after that æra, preserved this name ; for even in the days of Pliny it retained it ; and I don't know whether it does not retain it with very little alteration, at this period. The deadly quality of its waters, gave occasion to the poets, to feign that it was of infernal derivation, and to place the source, both of the lake, and the river which runs into it, in the region of the dead. Pliny says, that the waters of it, by being drunk, kill in an instant ; and adds upon the authority of Theophrastus, that there are little fish bred in it, which poison whoever eats them. Some ancient authors, attribute a faculty to its waters so intensely corrosive, that it can't be contained in any vessel, but one made of a wild ass's hoof, as it gnaws and tears to pieces, those made of any other materials ; and the disciples of Aristotle formerly pretended, that this secret was revealed by their master to Antipater, to instruct him how
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he might send some of this poisonous water to Babylon, for the destruction of Alexander.

IX. The learned Abbé Fourmont, who in the years 1729 and 30, by order of the most Christian king, made a voyage of critical enquiry to the Levant, where he scrutinized with the greatest exactness all Greece, and after passing the brook which supplied it with water, examined with much attention the Stygian Lake; which he gives the following horrible description of. He says, the water of the brook which runs into it, before it enters the lake, is clear, but after that, becomes thick and tainted; an alteration, which can only be imputed to the bad qualities and pernicious nature of its bottom. He says further, the surface presents to the view, a confused mixture of the most disgusting tints; and that a thick scum, of the colour of the rust of copper tinged with black, swims on its top, which being agitated by the wind, looks like the bubbles of boiling tar or bitumen. The obnoxious active quality of its waters, is not less pernicious than its aspect is displeasing; and the vapours which arise from them, blight all the plants that grow near the lake; and that its banks are avoided and fled from, by all sorts of beasts. The Abbé Fourmont mentions a circumstance, that contradicts what has been related by

Theophrastus, which is, that its fish poison whoever eats them; for he asserts, that no fish can live in the waters of the lake; and saying they are deadly to the very fish, is certainly an aggravation of their pernicious qualities.

X. The lake then, being in so many respects horrible and affrighting, it is no wonder that from these circumstances, poetic fancy should place it in the region of horror, or at the entrance of it.

XI. The fable of the boatman Charon, who for an obolo, an Athenian piece of money worth a little more than our halfpenny, carried the souls of the dead over the lake, was derived from an Egyptian story, related by Diodorus Siculus. There was in Egypt a lake, over which dead bodies after they were embalmed, were carried to the opposite shore to be buried; and there were judges appointed to attend at the place of embarkation, to examine into the course of life which had been led by the dead persons; and after this inquiry, to pronounce whether they were or were not, worthy to be interred; which office was exercised with such severity, that this common honour has been denied to some of the royal family. To this story there is annexed a tradition, which the Abbé Fourmont says, sub-

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sists in that part of Egypt at this day. The tradition is as follows ; that there was once a farmer of the revenues of one of the Pharaohs, who laid a tax upon this transportation of the dead, which brought in vast sums. Thus you see, that both in Greece and Egypt, there were found true materials, wherewith to fabricate the fable of the Stygian Lake, to build the boat which conveyed the dead bodies to the abyss, and to erect a monument, to eternize the avarice of the boatman Charon.

XII. The fable of the river Lethe, whose waters the dead are obliged to drink, to make them forget all they ever saw or knew in the region of the living, and also that of the boatman Charon, are both of African origin. This river rises near the great bog or quicksand, and after running under ground, and being hid for some miles, shews itself again near to the city of Berenice, now Bernick or Bernisho, greatly increased in size, by the addition made to it, by subterraneous waters ; and this made it thought, that it was not the same river which they had before seen bury itself under ground, and was also the circumstance, that gave rise to its deriving its source from Hell.

XIII. The river likewise which was antiently called Lethe, but now goes by the name of Limia, and runs through my native country; and concerning which, there was once a prevailing opinion among the Romans, that it had the same properties which the poets attributed to the infernal river, of causing forgetfulness, not only in those who drank of its waters, but also in those who waded through it, and it not being then certain whether this error or preoccupation with respect to the river Lethe, and the fiction of its source originating in Hell, took its rise from the river Lethe of my country; or whether the fable of the river Lethe coming from Hell, and the property of its waters being then established, might have occasioned the confounding the river Lethe of Galicia with the other.

XIV. I say, however this was, the opinion of the qualities of the river Lethe, was so rooted and fixed among the vulgar of the Romans, that when the consul Decimus Brutus, as Florus calls him, or Aulus Brutus, as he is called by Paterculus, was engaged in the conquest of Galicia, and who on account of his having conquered it, obtained the surname of Gallego; I say, when this consul came to the river Lethe, which is fordable, none of his soldiers, for fear of incurring

ring that general forgetfulness, would venture to wade through it, till the consul who was not preoccupied with the vulgar error, passed thro' it to the opposite shore; and when he was arrived there, turned about and called some of his countrymen by their names, by which he gave them to understand, that he had not incurred the forgetfulness they so much dreaded; and said further to them, as Florus informs us, *Formidatum Romanis fluvium oblivionis.*

XV. The story of Dedalus, and his being obliged to fly from the resentment of Minos, by means of the invention of wings, for having facilitated to Pasiphaë her abominable commerce with a bull, was meant to describe nothing more, than her having been enamoured with Taurus, who, according to Plutarch, was one of the principal generals in the army of Minos; and Dedalus's having assisted, by exerting the ordinary means practised on such occasions, in bringing about the completion of the lovers wishes; after finishing the business he fled from the vengeance of Minos, in a vessel that had sails, which might properly enough be compared to wings, and which the imagination being put to the stretch to find out a way of escaping, they were then supposed to have been first invented: or if the idea had before been

entertained, that was the first time of its being carried into practice.

XVI. The chimerical feats of Jason, and his stealing the golden fleece, are historically explained by the celebrated Samuel Bochart, who, by the help of his knowledge of the Phœnician language, discovered, that there were some words of equivocal meaning in that idiom, which gave occasion to the fabrication of this portentous fable. The Syriac word *Gaza*, in the Phœnician language, signifies both a treasure and a fleece; the word *Saur* also, in the same language, signifies both a wall and a bull; and the word *Nachas*, is also indifferently used to express a dragon and iron. Thus, instead of saying that Jason, by breaking down or scaling a wall defended by armed men, had made himself master of the treasure of the king of Colquida; they represent him, as having tamed the bulls which breathed fire, and the tremendous dragon, which guarded the golden fleece, and by that means had made himself master of it. Neither in the love of Medea for Jason, or in her running away with him, was there any thing extraordinary, or that required the assistance of Minerva, for a natural passion, accompanied with resolution, could without any other aid, surmount all the difficulties in such an undertaking.

XVII.

XVII. The Centaurs, half men and half horses, which make a great figure in the heathen mythology, were nothing more, according to the best authors, than types or representations of some of the inhabitants of Theffaly, who were the first people that were known to fight on horseback, and to train and break horses, for the use and business of war; and it was in that region, the poets placed the Centaurs, and it was from thence, that they say Hercules expelled them.

XVIII. The harpies (who could suppose it?) were no more than great swarms of locusts, which in the reign of king Phineus, desolated Paphlagonia. In the dictionary of Moreri (vid. the word Harpies) you may see the proofs of this, which I shall omit inserting here, as that dictionary is so well known.

XIX. In the same manner, from portions of profane history, may be explained many other parts of the heathen mythology; such as the fable of Perseus, that of Belerophonte, that of the Hesperides, that of the Gorgons, and many more. But this is not a matter of sufficient importance to dwell upon.

XX.

XX. I also confess, that there are some parts of profane mythological history, that may be opportunely explained by the sacred, as those who have embraced the general system of deducing the first from the last, have clearly proved; but their success in some of these particulars, has been the cause of their great error, as it has encouraged them in the absurd and incongruous attempt, of deducing from scripture, the whole Pagan mythology. I will here venture, notwithstanding this has been a path so much trodden, to point some especial marks of similitude and identity, between a deity of the gentiles, and a conspicuous person of holy writ. This is the example I before promised to give, and which relates to the resemblance between the father of the faithful with one of the most antient of the Pagan deities, that is, between Abraham and Saturn. But I must premise, that the reader is not indebted to me for this beautiful parallel, but to the Abbé Boissy, a member of the Academy Royal of Inscriptions and Belles Lettres at Paris, who is the person that advanced it in that famous assembly; and I shall translate it here in the sense of the language of the author, as I find it inserted, in the first volume of the History of that academy.

XXI.

XXI. He says that Saturn, according to the relations of the poets and historians, was the person who first introduced the detestable custom of sacrificing human victims. The Saturn of the Pagans, is in the judgment of the best critics, the Abraham of scripture; and a fragment of Sanchionata, which is produced by Eusebius, does to appearance, put the thing out of all doubt. The fragment runs as follows; *Saturn, whom the Phœnicians call Israel, was after his death classed among the gods, under the name of a planet, which at this time is called Saturn. In the days of this prince's reign in Phœnicia, he had by a nymph named Anobret, an only son whom he called Jeud, a word which even to this day, among the Phœnicians signifies only son.* Finding that he had engaged his country in a dangerous war, he adorned his son with the vestments and insignia of royalty, and sacrificed him on an altar erected by himself. In another fragment of the same Sanchionata, we find, that this same Saturn circumcised himself, and obliged all his family to do the like. Nicholas Damascenus, Justin, and other authors, give to Abramam the rank and quality of a king; and even the scripture remarks, that he made alliances, and treated with other kings as with his equals; and besides this, the patriarchs were known to exercise royal authority in their own
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families. Berofus, as we are informed by Josephus, adds, that Abraham had great skill in astrology; and Eupolemus, as we are told by Eusebius, says, that he was the inventor of the science of the Chaldeans. There needs nothing more to persuade us, that the Phœnicians were disposed to place him among the gods and the planets. They called him Israel, either from their confounding the grandfather with the grandson, or because they gave that name to the people who were descended from him. The name of *Jeud*, his only son, has the same meaning as that of *Isaac*; and *Anobret*, as Bochart informs us, signifies *ex gratia concipiens*, which signification, is very applicable to the circumstances of *Sarah*. Finally, and as the last instance of conformity between them, Saturn circumcised himself, and obliged all his family to do the same; a remarkable particular this, and which can agree only with the circumstances of Abraham. Thus far the before cited author.

XXII. I say the same of the two systems, that derive all the fictions of Paganism, the one from sacred, the other from profane history, that I say of all the other systems; which is, that there is somewhat of truth in every one of them, but that they all in general are false. Father Kircher inclined to the sentiment, that all the fables derived
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their origin from the language, or hyerogliphical characters of the Egyptians; although it is necessary, in order to support this opinion, to suppose that they all originated in Egypt, which is very wide of the truth; but as that kingdom in the ages of antiquity, made a great figure in the world, and was in an especial manner venerated as the metropolis of the sciences, it is probable, that the language of it, and the mysterious expressions of some of its inhabitants, which were ill understood, or not understood at all by the vulgar, might have given rise to some of the mythological tales.

XXIII. Bochart pretends to demonstrate, that they were all derived from the equivocal meaning of words in the Phœnician language, and with respect to some of them, has succeeded very happily in illustrating this sentiment; as for example, in his explanation of the fable of the golden fleece. But the general system is absurd, even if you suppose there is no other thing to object against it, than the chimera, that Phœnicia is the country from whence the whole of the fables are descended; but in order to prove this, it will be necessary to shew, that no histories depraved with fictions, were communicated to other kingdoms, but in Phœnician manuscripts.

XXIV. The Platonists imagined, that nothing else was concealed under the veil of fables, but
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documents and maxims of natural philosophy. And there certainly is something of this sort implied in them ; as for example, in the description which Homer gives of Aurora, as the daughter of the air, and the office which other poets assign to her, of the guardianship or custody of the gates of the east, which she is to open every morning with her dewy fingers, taking care to send the zephyrs before to dispel the dark shades. All which imagery at the bottom, means nothing more, than to describe the properties of the morning air, and to display the appearances of day-break in the east, before the sun rises above the horizon.

XXV. Others have imagined, that all the fables were meant to convey some moral or political lessons, and that the authors designed nothing more when they invented them, than to inculcate under a species of allegory, rational maxims, which might be useful in human life ; and there are really some of them, that seem to have been written with no other view. The fable of Phaeton for example, appears to have been calculated, to represent the dangers to which people expose themselves, by attempting things greatly superior to their power or abilities ; and that of Narcissus, to represent the extravagance and folly of self-love or admiration. But saying that all the
fables

fables were written with this design, would be a manifest chimera.

XXVI. Finally, the infatuated alchymists, or at least some of them, have dreamed, that the fables of which we have been speaking, contain enigmatically, the doctrine of the philosophers stone; that is, that they teach in a mysterious way, all the operations which are necessary to be gone thro', for attaining the happy secret of transmuting all other metals into gold. Perhaps what occasioned this silly apprehension, was their finding in the idiom of their art, the names of the seven principal deities of the Pagans, which are the same as those of the seven planets, applied to the seven metals they make use of; but the application of those names to the metals, was posterior many ages, to their being given to the deities and the planets. The first alchymists who called the metals by those names, were excited to do it by the same motive, which has ever induced them to give to all the materials, operations, and effects of their art, strange and sounding names, which they do, either to conceal their pretended secrets, or by the mysterious magnificence of their stile, to attract the respect and admiration of the vulgar; and the resemblance of the splendor of the sun's rays to the colour of gold, and the light of the moon,

to that of silver, was favourable to their intention, and assisted them in making the application.

XXVII. This system, is not only in its complex or whole substance, but in each, and every one of its parts, destitute of all foundation, and is therefore not worthy to be controverted, but should be treated with that contempt, which both this, and all the other imaginary productions of the alchymists deserve.

XXVIII. If this letter shall afford you neither entertainment nor instruction, it will at least serve as an apology for my conduct, and incline you to retract the censure, which you have fulminated against me, and my discourse of the *Divorce of History from Fable*; and I hope that at all events, your resentment will be calmed, and your apprehensions quieted by the following reflection; that although in that discourse I have weakened the bond of matrimony between the two parties, I have in this letter, on one of the sides, established a degree of affinity between them.

O N

BOOKS OF INSTRUCTION, WITH RESPECT TO POLITICS.

S E C T. I.

I. **W**E scarce ever hear the antients talked of, with that judgment and moderation which good sense dictates. They are either treated with excessive veneration, or else they are scoffed at and despised, and this is generally governed by the subject matter on which you discourse. If this happens to be science or learning, the antient professors are talked of, as men much superior in abilities and comprehension to any of the moderns ; and it will scarcely be admitted, that these last have discovered any thing, which was not known to the others long before. But when political sagacity or industry becomes the subject of conversation, all the advantage is given to these latter times ; and to such an excessive degree, that the men of former ages, com-

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pared to them, are considered as a sort of demi-brutes, who were actuated by a blind ferocity, and who exercised power, unrestrained by reason, and with a daring hardness, void of all address.

II. I am of opinion, that this comparison between the antients and moderns should be inverted, and the things placed in a quite opposite point of view. I say, the moderns should be considered as superior to the antients in science, but not in political industry. The reason is, because science is communicated by books; and as we find expressed in those all which the antient professors ever attained, we by them are enabled to enrich our minds with the discoveries, not only of one, but many learned men. Thus a modern, of equal application and ingenuity with an antient, may consider himself as a river, which is enlarged by the stock flowing from all those fountains, and who has over and above this, a source in his own reason, with which he may add somewhat to the whole.

III. But this is not the case with political industry. For there is scarce any man who possesses a greater stock of policy, than what arises from the funds he has within himself. It is true, that you will find books full of political documents,

peculiar, and an especial something, which is characteristic of himself, and distinguishes him from all others; and this is apt to vary in the same individual, according to the different temperament or disposition of his body or mind. A frank sentence, delivered with energy and grace, may be capable of exciting the admiration, respect, and applause, of the same person, whom it might offend, if spoken in a different manner; and the very same thing, pronounced timidly, ungraciously, and with an unpleasant countenance, might excite contempt, or indignation.

VI. A pirate who had fallen into the hands of Alexander, told the conqueror to his face, that he was a greater robber than himself, which was so far from exciting the indignation of that prince, that he rather seemed pleased with the man's frankness. The liberty that Clitus took with him, was not near so insolent or injurious, and Alexander run him through with a lance. From whence could this extreme difference in Alexander's feelings arise? Why from the pirate's speaking with an heroic and serene firmness; and from Clitus his having spoken with a coarse impatience, and rustic impetuosity. This difference of manner is never to be acquired by study, but is the production and effect of innate genius.

VII. It

VII. It is commonly said, that flattery is one of the most certain means by which a man can make his fortune; but with all this, how many thousands of flatterers do we see despised and neglected? The reason is, because there are very few of them, who know how to give to flattery that nice application which communicates strength to it, and makes it appear meritorious. Nor is it of any avail, to those who are so unfortunate as not to hit upon the mode of doing this, to study by detail the motions, the words, the air, and gestures of the fortunate, as the application we have mentioned, depends upon an innate genial quality, which can never be counterfeited by imitation; for how many people do we see make themselves ridiculous, by imitating the very thing, which when done by others, makes them respected?

VIII. Every political negotiation, may be compared to a machine, composed of many wheels, every one of which, by being more rigid, or more pliant, than is consistent with its just proportion, renders the whole machine useless; or it may be compared to a chemical process of long duration, whose success depends upon the different degrees of heat, to be applied with great nicety and precision, in the different stages of the process. But all the books that were ever written, either upon

chemistry or mechanics, can never teach how to preserve this exact proportion of rigidity or pliability in the metals, or to apply this nice degree of heat to the fire, which is necessary for the completion of the business, and to answer the purposes intended. Even in these material operations, where the most nice and delicate parts of them, and the ultimate degree of exactitude in their execution, must be confided to a gift or innate talent in the artificer, we find that precepts are unequal to teach their performance; how then in political ones, where there is neither rule nor limits to determine their extension, their degrees of suspension, delay, or acceleration, with a thousand other contingent circumstances, can modes be prescribed for their execution?

S E C T. II.

IX. The impossibility of imitating political examples, will be found still more manifest, if we consider, besides the person who acts, the people he is to act with. What is it to the purpose, that such an ambassador, has negotiated perfectly well at such a court, by employing such means? This example will be of no use to another ambassador, because, abstracted from an infinite number of other circumstances, a repetition of whose perfect
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affemblage will scarce ever happen, he does not negotiate with the same ministers; and every different genius, has a different door, through which you must enter to have access to his spirit.

X. I may be told, that the political books have provided against this inconvenience, and have accommodated negotiators with a variety of prudent precepts, suited to the various geniuses with whom you are to treat. This is nothing to the purpose, but is all talking at random. For the examination of these geniuses, must be made by the negotiator, and not by the author of the book, and the difference and variety of geniuses, is totally incomprehensible to the human understanding. Every man has his distinct one, which is no more exactly like that of other men, than the features of his face. The terms in which these are described, both in books of morality and politics, are general. They tell you, that one man is passionate, another gentle; one ambitious, another moderate; one avaricious, another liberal; one courageous, another timid, &c. Do you think that these are the ultimate, and only differences to be found in geniuses? No, they are not; but are sorts or species, every one of which, contains within itself innumerable differences. Have you not seen a man, who was remarkable for facing his enemy in battle, and

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timid

timid in supporting his opinion in conversation? and another who is very patient under acute pain, and outrageous upon hearing any thing injurious said against him? What does all this amount to, but that these are different degrees of valour, and of patience, which we have no names for? and it would be impossible to give names to all of them, because they are innumerable.

XI. These things may be compared to colours. If you should be asked how many species of colours there are, you would begin by reckoning up eight or ten; such as the red, the green, the blue, the white, &c. But can you suppose, that these are the ultimate and only species? No, they are subalterns, as the logicians call them, or sorts, every one of which, has innumerable species. To convince you of this truth, examine the leaves of a hundred plants of different species. You will find them all green, but not in any one of them, will you find a green perfectly like to that of any other plant. To every different species of plant, there is a correspondent different texture of the insensible particles of its leaves, and a different texture of the insensible particles, occasions a different reflexion of the light, in which, according to the most probable opinion, consists the diversity of the colours.

XII. In

XII. In the same manner, there is no man who has not a distinct particular temperament, and different from that of all other men; and to a distinct temperament, there is no doubt, but there must be annexed a distinct genius.

S E C T. III.

XIII. Don't imagine, that in political concerns, these minute differences are of no consequence; for oftentimes the whole depends upon them. Historians represent Philip the second severe; and they also represent the great Tamerlane the same, and even describe him as a ferocious and most cruel prince; but this second charge, is either false or uncertain. Who can comprehend, the difference there was between the severity of the two men? perhaps it might have been imperceptible. But with all this, it was sufficient to produce upon some particular occasions, diametrically opposite effects. A buffoon, with whom Philip was much entertained, said to him upon a certain occasion, a witty thing which the prince thought was indecent, for which he punished him with banishment: a pleasant poet, with whom Tamerlane used to amuse himself, said a satirical thing to him, which expressed a contempt of his person;

person; and in return, Tamerlane made him a handsome present.

XIV. If I should be told, that this may depend not upon the substantial diversity, and let us call it by this name, of the different geniuses, but upon the accidental humour, which at that time prevailed in either of the princes, it being certain, that the same person may have his favourable and unfavourable moments, according as various internal or external causes affect his mind, and dispose it, either towards anger, or complacency; I reply, that for the support of my argument, one of these causes answers my purpose as well as the other. This same accidental disposition, is for the most part impenetrable, and is only known by experience from bad success, and after the mischief is done. The clouds of the soul, are sometimes seen on the brow of the countenance; but they for the most part do not appear; nor do we perceive them, till they are manifested to us by the flash of anger.

XV. So that all this upon reflexion, is but adding difficulty to difficulty. A man who has business, or pretensions to advance, should examine the genius of the prince or great person he is to negotiate with; and when by dint of much labour and industry, he has arrived at a
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thorough knowledge of him, he should watch the benign or adverse motions of the planet, whose auspices he is to observe, which he will never find instructions for doing, in any political almanack whatever.

XVI. From all that has been said, it may be inferred, that written directions, are of little, or no service in these cases. They make politicians for a coffee-house, but not for the cabinet; and may teach people to talk, but not to act; for the hoping to find the circumstances of the business to be treated upon, the same with those of the case or cases in the book, would be entertaining a metaphysical and uncertain expectation: on account, both of the substantial and accidental diversity of the geniuses with whom you are to treat; and also, on account of the diversity in the mode of acting by the same agent, at different times. This last circumstance, which is but little attended to, is sufficient of itself, for the reasons we have mentioned before, to produce effects, totally different from those, we are taught to expect by the documents.

S E C T. IV.

XVII. If the instruction of great masters was capable of making a man a politician, Richard Cromwel, the son of Oliver, should have been
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one of the greatest the world ever produced. The same Oliver, who after the tragical death of Charles the First of England, which he had a principal hand in accomplishing, erected himself into the tyrant of that kingdom, under the title of a Protector; and without doubt, Cromwel the father was one of the most able politicians which either that, or any other age had ever seen. His industry and his valour, raised him from a middling station of life, to the highest degree of military and magisterial rank. His address and resolution, enabled him to accomplish that unexampled attempt, of trying, and with all the formality of a legal process, condemning his own Sovereign to an ignominious death. When the King was dispatched, he abolished the house of Lords, and vested the whole authority of parliament in the Commons; whom he afterwards divested of all their power, by driving the members when they were assembled, ignominiously out of their house; and as a testimony of the arbitrary authority with which he acted, and to shew that was not a transitory expulsion, he caused a board to be nailed on the outside of the door, on which was the following inscription, *This house to be let*. In fine, he ruled that kingdom to his last gasp, with a more absolute sway, than any King who had ever gone before, or since his time has succeeded

succeeded to the throne ; bringing about, that a parliament being convened by himself for the purpose, should declare the title and office of Protector hereditary in his family. All this he executed in a nation, so fierce and zealous of their liberties as the English, which is the clearest proof that can be given, of his supreme political abilities. In reality, I am disposed to believe all circumstances considered, that there never to this day, has appeared a man, who did so much, or has shewed so many, and so great marks of political ability, as Oliver Cromwel.

XVIII. In the school of this great man, his son Richard was tutored many years, and not only with instructions purely theoretical or verbal, but practical and executive. He saw all the movements, and various expedients, which his father exerted and played off, according to the various exigencies of his affairs ; neither was the reason of proportioning these means, to attain particular ends, concealed from him. And of what use was all this to the disciple ? Of none, because instead of teaching him how to acquire something more than he possessed, it did not so much as instruct him how to preserve that which his father had left him firmly established in ; and before a year had passed over his head after his father's death, notwithstanding it had been secured to him by
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act of parliament, he found himself deposed from the rank of Protector, and obliged to live retired like a private gentleman, in a country house. If within the same kingdom, and negotiating with the same people, and in the same situation of affairs, where the views were directed to the same objects, all the lessons both of theory and practice which he had received from his father, were unprofitable to this man, who did not retain one political arcanum, of the great number that had been communicated to him from the vast fund of knowledge and penetration of so able a master; and if a school of politics so circumstanced, was of no use to him who studied in it for so many years, what occasion have we to expect, that by the simple reading of books, a man should ever attain the art, of skilfully directing the business of a state?

XIX. Nor is there any reason to suppose, that Richard was a stupid man, and totally incapable of receiving instruction; for nobody has described him as such; nor is it credible, if he had been such a sort of person, that the English would have permitted him to have continued with the rank of Protector as the successor to his father, for the little time he enjoyed it. The truth is, that he was much inferior to his father in natural talents; and that no political instructions were
capable

capable of supplying this defect. Oliver was not only a man of great capacity, but of a genius that was apt and suitable to every thing, and equally understood how to command an army, or to direct a state. Over and above this, he was magnanimous, and possessed a stout heart. There was not known a more courageous foldier, in the age in which he lived. When the town of Hull was besieged by King Charles, and in a weak state of defence, Oliver at the head of only twelve horsemen, threw himself into the place, by breaking through the centre of the royal army, exposed to the fire of showers of bullets; and the preservation of the town, was owing to the many prodigies of valour which Oliver exerted in its defence. In one of the battles in which he was engaged, he took with his own hands, two standards of cavalry, and the colours of a regiment of infantry. In another battle, where one wing of the parliament army was totally routed, and the Earl of Manchester the general put to flight, Oliver, without giving himself scarce time to have a dangerous wound he had received in the battle bound up, flew to stop the earl and the fugitive troops, on whom his ardour and eloquence had so much weight, that they returned with him to the charge, and intirely put to flight and dispersed the royal army. These and other acts of extraordinary valour,

valour, joined to the many victories he obtained by dint of his intrepid courage, gained him the respect and esteem of the English, who are naturally enamoured with bravery, and idolizers of military glory.

XX. To these great talents, Oliver added the lure of hypocrisy, which has vast influence on the populace. At the same time that he was bathing his hands in the blood of Great Britain, and striving to dethrone his legitimate prince, in order to usurp the sovereign power, the name of God was constantly in his mouth; who he endeavoured to make it believed, was the especial director of his conduct, and that he himself was nothing more than an instrument, who in obedience to the divine will, executed the decrees of heaven for the public good, and to advance the prosperity of the kingdom.

XXI. These good and bad qualities, were united in Oliver Cromwel, and all conspired, to enable him to deprive a powerful monarch of his crown and life, and to overturn a great state. But of what advantage was it to his son Richard, to hear his father's lessons, and to see these examples, if he did not inherit his father's talents?

XXII. I am already aware, that there will be some, who will be prepared to urge as an excuse
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for Richard, the apology which Dionysius the younger made for himself; who, when he was asked, how it came to pass that his father from being a private man, acquired the principality of Sicily, and that he who succeeded to him as a prince, found himself reduced to live as a common subject; replied, my father left me his crown, but did not leave me heir to his fortune. But with all this, there is no doubt, that the fall of Richard was owing to his want of ability to conduct himself, and it is very probable, that the disgrace of Dionysius originated from the same cause. There is no indiscreet man whatever, who does not impute to fortune, the mischiefs he brings on himself by his imprudence. Dionysius the younger, was more cruel than his father, and was nothing near equal to him in the capacity of a warrior. Thus, the Syracusians experienced from him, severities that irritated them, and also found, that he wanted the necessary power to keep them in subjection. Between the Cromwells, this inequality was much more conspicuous. The father had an able head, and a great heart. The son had neither head nor heart; and it was for want of resolution, that at the beginning of the revolt, he suffered himself to be overpowered by the leaders of the opposite faction; and it was for want of judgment or a head, that he placed such excessive confidence in the ties of kindred, and

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relied wholly on his uncle and brother-in-law, who in their hearts were unfriendly to him, and in the end were those who deposed him.

S E C T. V.

XXIII. There is not, as I have already said, any instruction whatever, that is capable of supplying or correcting these defects. Tuition, cannot communicate valour to him, who has it not naturally; and the knowledge of what people you can put confidence in, upon such and such particular occasions, is precisely the effect of perspicuity and native sagacity, accompanied with solicitous and vigilant observation; neither of which, can ever be taught. He, who by his temperament and disposition is slothful, can never be made active; because the temperament is not to be mended or altered. When you have done your best to correct it, you will find, that it is like a dull jadish horse, who, when he is spurred, will be enlivened for a minute, but immediately afterwards reverts to his ordinary sloth.

XXIV. And indeed, intellectual heaviness, is more difficult to be remedied than the other. I defy you to spur a slow understanding into reasoning with any agility; nor can you make
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it advance a step faster without causing it to stumble; and he who, left to his own natural heaviness, might possibly hit upon something right, if he is hurried, would be for ever making mistakes and blunders. Load such a man with political lessons, and you will find, that it would have the effect of a burden laid upon a dull beast; which would make him to move more heavily than he did before. While he is revolving in his mind precepts and examples, and examining them one by one, to determine which is adaptable to the circumstances and matter he is to determine upon, he lets slip the opportunity of giving his vote in the cabinet, or of acting in the business.

XXV. But supposing the matter in question admits of delay, he will scarce find in all his expedients acquired by study, one, which in all its circumstances, will exactly quadrate with the case in debate, for the expecting to find repeated in their full extent, the same indentical complex of accidents, is entertaining a metaphysical idea, and wandering out of the ordinary course of nature. It may be objected to this reasoning, that a person of ability, might modify and suit the doctrines he has been taught, by making a few alterations in them, to fit the case in question: I answer, that the same talents that it would require to do this, would enable him, without resorting

to this auxiliary aid, to find out a proper expedient in the business himself. And it is worthy of observation, that an expedient, which a man who is to negotiate a business hits upon himself, although in general it may be inferior to one that might be acquired by study, still it may do better for that particular occasion, than the one of superior quality, which was the offspring of another understanding. There is no man whatever, who does not with more dexterity, carry into execution his own ideas, than those of other people; for these are plants which thrive but ill, when they are transplanted from their own native soil. Every one comprehends the force, the use, and the opportuneness of a maxim, which springs from the source of his own mind; and on account of the correspondence and agreement there is, between the reasoning and the operative faculties in one and the same person, a man's head, accommodates itself well to the execution of the means, which his own understanding invented.

XXXI. But, abstracted from this consideration, it is certain, that all men have their distinct mode of acting; and the mode of operation, is of the utmost importance for the attaining of ends. Of what use would my having read the device, with which another man extricated himself from a difficulty,

difficulty, if when I had occasion to put the same scheme in practice, I found myself not possessed of the dexterity, the agility, the air and manner, with which the other gave life and efficacy to his contrivance? a deficiency in point of valour only, would spoil the whole; it being an established truth, that a tremulous hand cannot draw a steady line.

S E C T. VI.

XXVII. We may add to this, that the inserting the great number of maxims and cautions which we read in histories, arose principally from the negligence, sloth, or ignorance of those, with whom the communicators of them have had to do in negotiations. If I can't suppose in the business that presents itself to me, some of those specific defects in the people with whom I am to treat; the imitation of the maxims, will not only stand me in no stead, but may be hurtful to me. The same motion of the arm, which in fencing may kill an unwary enemy, may give an opening to another who is watchful and attentive, to demolish the person who made the motion.

S E C T. VII.

XXVIII. Finally : Experience is the arbitrator in these matters, as it is in most others. There have in all times, been eminent politicians, without the assistance of books ; and very lame ones, who have read and studied them. It is certain, that in Tacitus, we see exposed, the errors by which some princes lost their crowns, and the artifices by which others acquired or preserved them. Charles the First of England, was a great admirer of Tacitus, whose works he always carried about with him, and for which he had so great a respect, that he adopted them as the oracles of his government. Notwithstanding this, they did not teach him to avoid the errors of those who had lost their crowns ; nor to imitate the arts of those, who had acquired or preserved them ; and with all the assistance of this great guide Tacitus, he scarce advanced a step, that did not approach him to the precipice ; and by pursuing, or misunderstanding the maxims of that politician, he caused himself to descend from the throne, in order to mount the scaffold.

XXIX. By way of contrast to Charles the First of England, we may instance Charles the First
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of Spain, and the Fifth of Germany, who, without the assistance of literature, but left solely to the benefit of his own genius, was one of the most profound politicians of the age in which he lived.

XXX. The Romans, conquered the world without the help of books, and lost it after they knew the use of them. It was in the reign of Augustus, that the first schools of politics were opened in Rome; I mean, that then the Romans began to read the Grecian histories, in which are represented the industry and arduous application exerted by that most sagacious people, in the management of public business. Of what use was all this instruction to the Romans? Of the same it had been before to the Greeks themselves; who, when they had present and before their eyes, inserted in written histories, the conduct of their greatest politicians, were obliged to submit to the superior ability of the Romans, who had not the least benefit of those instructions; and the Romans, after that cultivation was introduced among them, proceeded by little and little, to lose all they had gained before.

XXXI. The two Roman historians, Livius and Sallust, who both wrote in the reign of Augustus, were in no wise inferior to the best Greek

ones ; and the Romans, in case they had not well understood the foreign ones, had then masters of their own. We may add to this, that they had for their instruction, the great example of Augustus himself ; who, not from the help of reading or study, but by the dint of his own excellent genius, was without doubt a most signal politician. But all this was useless, and perhaps hurtful. Rome, which had gone on continually prospering, while she was a stranger to these lessons, was, soon after she began to listen to them, advancing fast to her destruction. Or let us express it in another way ; the Romans were great politicians when they did not conceit themselves such ; and ceased to be so, when by studying foreign maxims, they fancied they had improved themselves much in political knowledge.

XXXII. But where is the necessity of making a repetition of examples ? All those who were the first founders of monarchies and republics, were endued with supreme political abilities ; for without possessing those talents, how could they have trained a roving and savage multitude, to submit to the yoke, and live sociably and quietly under one prince, or a determined set of magistrates ? What books could they study, at a time when such things were hardly known ? And what examples could they copy after, who were
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the first that adopted that kind of management? Those who succeeded them, had the benefit of their examples for their guidance; but with all this advantage, the greatest part of them could do no more, than just preserve the dominion that fell to them by inheritance, very few improved it, and some of them lost it. So that we may apply to both one and the other of them respectively, what Cæsar in his oration for Catiline, said in the Roman senate, *Profecto virtus, atque sapientia major in illis fuit, qui ex parvis opibus magnum imperium facere, quam in nobis, qui ea bene parta vix retinemus.* (*Apud Sallustium*)

S E C T. VIII.

XXXIII. What we have said in this discourse, is equally adaptable to high and low policy, both the one and the other of which, are derived from the bottom of the soul. The first requires a noble innate disposition, a clear understanding, and firm virtue; the second, cunning, dissimulation, and hypocrisy. Activity and resolution, are qualities precisely necessary in both of them; and he who possesses these requisites, whenever there is occasion to exert his talents, and apply them to practice, will be found a good politician, although he has never looked into a political book.

XXXIV.

XXXIV. I won't however deny, that historical instances may not afford some sort of aid, but I assert, that they don't do it in the way that is commonly supposed. The study of history, will make no man a politician who is not such by nature and genius; but he who has the natural necessary talents for becoming one, may derive some advantage from it; because it furnishes him with a general knowledge of the various dispositions and arts of men, and because the reading of many uncommon events, may prevent his being surprized or alarmed when such occur to him; and because also, the reverses of fortune which present themselves at every turn in history, may put him on his guard, and teach him not to have too much confidence in his own security.

XXXV. It is true, that all these benefits, are attended with their inconveniences, which are a sort of counterpoise to them; in the first place, a multiplicity of instances may perplex; and in the second, the apprehensions of the misfortunes he has seen happen so frequently, may intimidate a man. The memory being crowded with a great number of species, occasions, when it is necessary to separate and examine any one particularly, a prolix discussion, which is much exposed to perplexities

plexities and mistakes. The consideration of the many reverses of fortune people are liable to, and the strange accidents that frequently befall them, which no human precaution can guard against, is apt to beget in the mind a great diffidence, which when a man is obliged to act, often renders his operations remiss and languid.

XXXVI. But with respect to the various expedients, which present themselves in history, and by which politicians of former times accomplished the ends they had in view, I apprehend that they embarrass more than they assist. Even though we could meet with here and there one adaptable to the matter in question, the selecting it from among such a multitude of others, and the finding out perfectly its proportions, requires more pains and study, than it would cost a man to invent a fresh expedient, which he might derive from the fund of his own understanding.

XXXVII. The books which are wrote expressly upon politics, and which proceed by cases, conclusions and aphorisms, only teach general rules; which would occur to, and be taken in or comprehended by, every man of good understanding, without the assistance of a book; and besides this, they require so much consideration
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and attention, and are liable to so many exceptions, and demand so many limitations and restrictions in particular instances, that considered in the latitudinary manner in which they are propounded, they become absolutely useless.

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 C H A R A C T E R S
 Of some Persons who have been famous in
 H I S T O R Y.

I. **N**OT only the people, whose defence we undertake in this discourse, lived in different times, and were of different ranks, sexes, and professions, but the subject-matters also, to which the apologies apply, were of different kinds. This diversity of itself, seems as if it would require a distinct discourse to apologize for each person separately; and in truth, some authors have written whole volumes, upon subjects that were not of any more importance. But as the variety of different matters which I have proposed to comprehend under this head,

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obliges me to be as concise as possible ; I conjecture, that for the sake of the convenience that will result from my doing so, I may be allowed to range them under one common title. By pursuing this method, I shall prefer the benefit of the reader to my own ; for if I had divided into many discourses, what might be comprehended under one general head, he would have paid me for writing a great deal, which was not of more value than so much blank paper ; as in large letters, the titles of so many discourses would have occupied a considerable space ; and I, with little trouble to myself, should have been paid the same price for the book, as if it had been all filled with useful matter.

EMPEDOCLES.

S E C T. I.

H. I shall not contend whether Empedocles, was a good or a bad philosopher, or a good or a bad poet, although he professed both these faculties ; neither shall I dispute, whether he was so ostentatious, as always to appear in public cloathed in purple, with a crown of gold upon his head ; or so vain, as to aspire at being ho-

noured as a divinity; but I shall confine myself, to examining whether he was so frantically ambitious, as to throw himself privately into the flames of Mount Ætna, to avoid his body being found, in order to make the world believe, that he had been carried alive up to Heaven; to the end, that he might afterwards be worshiped as a deity. This circumstance, is positively asserted in many books; and Empedocles from thence, came to be quoted, as an instance of the extravagance of the heathen philosophers; and upon all occasions, when people in conversation discoursed upon morality, it was introduced as an argument of the foolish ambition of mortals, which they conclude is a frailty annexed to our nature, and that it corresponds with the suggestion contained in the expression of the old serpent to our first parents, *You shall be treated as if ye were gods.* This information is taken from the writings of the most ancient Greek authors, such as Hippobotus, Diodorus of Ephesus, &c. and from them it has been diffused into the works of the Greeks and Latins. What we find in Horace upon the subject is very trivial:

..... *Deus immortalis haberi*

*Dum cupit Empedocles, ardentem frigidus Ætnam
Insistit.*

III. One of the elemental rules of Criticism, is, that when with respect to any fact, we meet with different historical opinions, to abide by that which is the least improbable; or where the circumstances of probability are equal, to adopt that opinion which is supported by the best authority. But I see this rule, which is clearly dictated by the light of nature, frequently abandoned, and to such a degree, that some writers seem as if they took pains to pursue a contrary method; which most likely proceeds, from the improbable being nearly allied to the marvellous, which, although it is not so well calculated to establish or persuade our assent to a fact, gives lustre to the relation, and authors are generally fonder of ostentation than of truth.

IV. There is an instance of this, in the subject we are treating of. It is true, that Hippobotus, and Diodorus of Ephesus, give the account we have mentioned of the death of Empedocles; but there are three other writers, whom I look upon to be of equal authority, and who are more ancient; to wit, Timeus, Neanthes of Cyzicus, and Demetrius Trezenius, who all give other, and different accounts of the manner in which he died, that are beyond comparison more probable than those given by the first two. Why then should not these be believed

lieved before those other two, the improbability of whose relations stares you full in the face? Consider Empedocles on the margin of the volcano, with that ocean of fire presenting itself to his sight, and a horrible death to his imagination. Is it credible, that in such a situation, he, for an ideal felicity, which could not be termed more than imaginary; I say, is it credible, that a reasonable entity, who well knew that after his death he could not be sensible of any enjoyment to be derived from a mistaken notion of mankind, should, for such a chimera, precipitate himself into that abyfs of sulphur and flame? I will venture to pronounce that he could not.

V. But let us proceed. Admitting that any man could be absurd enough to suppose such a thing probable, who was a witness of the fact? Why, nobody; for this must be taken for granted; and they say, is to be inferred from the circumstances of his disappearance, for that with the most diligent search that could be made, they could never find his body: others contradict this relation; and Timeus, so far from admitting that he died in Sicily, or in the neighbourhood of Mount *Ætna*, says, that he passed over to Peloponnesus, and died there. But allowing, that he died in Sicily, and taking for granted, the circumstance of their being unable to find his dead

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body,

body, could not this have disappeared, without being plunged into the gulph of Mount *Ætna*? Terenius says, that being grown very old, as he was walking along a cliff on the sea coast, as it was customary for him to do, his foot slipped, and he fell into the water, and was drowned; and that his body was never found afterwards; which is a much more probable account of its disappearance than the other.

VI. I may be told, this could not be so, because manifest tokens were found of his having thrown himself into the abyss of Mount *Ætna*. The principal of these tokens was, that a little while afterwards, one of his shoes, by the emission of the flame, was thrown out of the volcano: so Hippobotus tells us; but this is a glaringly fabulous tale; although it should be affirmed by five hundred Hippobotuses. The flame of *Ætna*, which the hardness of marble is unable to resist, had such a respect for the shoe of Empedocles, as to leave it unsinged? But they say it was made of metal, which is a subterfuge, that besides being ridiculous, is of no avail in the case; for admitting that that philosopher, either to appear particular and different from other men, or from some other vain motive, should have been so extravagant as to wear metal shoes; would this have indemnified them from being consumed by the

the voracious flame of the volcano? By no means, for it is well known, that the powerful activity of its heat, in an instant, dissolves the hardest of metals. In the amazing and terrifying vomit of lava, which it emitted in the year 1665, it cast up such a quantity of liquid metal, that it ran down in a river of fire, till it nearly approached the city of Catania. And among other experiments that were made to try the intense heat of that melted metal, was contriving to introduce a sword blade into it, which as far as it was immersed, instantly became liquid.

VII. A joke, which Father Dechaies tells of a Spaniard, concerning Mount *Ætna*, seems so applicable to this matter, that I think it will not be amiss to relate it. He had considered, that volcanos had subsisted a great many ages, and that there was no metal except gold, which fire would not consume, and concluded from thence, that all the metal which boiled in the Volcano must be gold. Filled with this conceit, he persuaded himself that he had found out an easy method of acquiring immense riches, which he proposed to do by the following invention. He got a strong iron kettle made, to the handle of which, he fastened a long iron chain, and by that, he let the kettle down till it reached the metal, and hoped by dipping it in, to draw up a large

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quantity

quantity of liquid gold. But what followed? Why, that the moment the kettle entered the burning mass, both that, and a part of the chain were melted, and the poor Spaniard was left with the other part of the chain in his hand, which he was obliged to draw up with the loss of the lower end, and his kettle. So powerful and active is the heat of that burning metal. Thus it would have been better for Hippobotus, to have feigned the shoes of Empedocles to have been made of Salamanders hairs, which it is said can never be consumed by fire.

D E M O C R I T U S.

S E C T. II.

VIII. The vulgar opinion has represented this philosopher, as a poor madman, and an extravagant buffoon, who passed his whole life in continual bursts of laughter, and who by laughing at every thing, had made himself the laughing-stock and derision of all mankind; and the conclusion drawn from thence has been, that he was not less ignorant than ridiculous. But notwithstanding this opinion has been so generally adopted, it is easy to demonstrate, that Democritus in reality, was one of the most thinking and enlightened men of antiquity. A proof of which, was his applica-

application to study, his manner of living, the estimation he was held in by his countrymen, and his vast learning and wisdom. All that we are about to urge in his defence, is taken from the authorities of Diogenes Laertius, Athenæus, Valerius Maximus, Cicero, and other writers of eminence.

IX. His application to study was such, that he lived in an almost continued state of seclusion from the world. He hardly ever stirred out of his house; nor within it, did he scarce allow himself any respite from his labours, but remained almost always shut up in his study, reading, meditating, and writing. His ardent desire for acquiring more and more lights and information, induced him to leave for a long time, not only his retirement, but his country also, and to travel into distant nations, in order to consult the learned men of Egypt, Persia, and Chaldea; and as some say, even went to consult those of Ethiopia, and India likewise. He expended in these peregrinations, all that he inherited from his father, which amounted to a hundred talents. At his return to his own country, he was accused before the magistrates, as a dissipater of his paternal inheritance; which in that country, was looked upon as a serious offence, and was punished, by depriving the spendthrift of being buried

with his ancestors, as an unworthy descendant of his family. The method Democritus took to justify himself, was very singular. He produced to his judges, the best book he had written, which was intitled, *The Great Diacosmus*, and read to them a large portion of it, and pleaded, that the knowledge contained in that book, was the fruit of his travels, and that he had expended his paternal inheritance in acquiring it. The magistrates were astonished at the profundity of the learning contained in the book, and determined, that his money had been well expended in making the acquisition; and not only acquitted Democritus of the charge that had been brought against him, but adjudged that he should be rewarded with five hundred talents, to be paid out of the public treasury, and adjudged further, that statues should be erected to him as a most excellent man. Let any one now consider, whether it is probable, that his country should pay such honourable attention to a person, who was a ridiculous fellow, and a buffoon? to say nothing of his being looked upon as a half madman, who every moment of his life, was scoffing at his judges, his country, and all mankind.

X. The great application of Democritus, accompanied with his vast and subtil genius, begot such a high opinion of the extent of his learning, that no man was considered as his equal

in that respect in the age in which he lived ; for at the same time that the philosophers of those days, extended their studies and enquiries, no further than to the contemplation of physics, ethics, and metaphysics ; Democritus added to these three faculties, medicine, botany, geometry, arithmetic, music, astronomy, poetry, painting, and the knowledge of languages. All which, may be inferred from the catalogues of his works, to be found in Diogenes Laertius.

XI. I ask now, whether the circumstances we have enumerated with respect to Democritus, bespeak him to be a ridiculous buffoon ? or whether they may not rather be termed descriptive of a grave, serious, contemplative man, of much superior lights to the generality of mankind ?

XII. I confess, that the laughter of Democritus has been a proverb in the world, which has been commonly used to express laughter to excess ; although the proverb took its rise from the accounts some ancient authors have given of this philosopher. But notwithstanding this, I will venture to assert, the laughter of Democritus, which has been so much talked of, did not exceed the bounds, which should circumscribe the gravity of philosophy.

XIII. In order to demonstrate this, we should premise, that all the ills to which man is exposed, may be said to spring from three sources, which are those of malice, misfortune, and ignorance, or want of information. These three evils, to those who rationally contemplate them, will appear to excite naturally, three distinct affections. That is to say, malice, to be productive of indignation; misfortune, grief; and ignorance, laughter. According then to whichever of these causes we consider the evil to spring, we should suppose it to excite an affection correspondent to that cause; and from hence, arises the great characteristic difference of affections, which has been remarked to predominate between the two antagonist philosophers, Heraclitus, and Democritus. Heraclitus, is described to have been weeping and sad, and to the same excess, that Democritus is said to have been laughing and cheerful. That is, these tokens of the characters of the two men, were supposed to be produced, in the first by his misfortunes, and in the second by his follies. This is the common opinion; but I for myself believe, that the fault of Heraclitus, was rather the offspring of indignation than compassion; and that he did not consider the evils of mankind, to proceed so much from their misfortunes, as from their malice. This is apparent, from his three letters to his friend

friend Hermodorus, which are the only fragments that have been handed down to us of his writings : what he says there, when he is speaking of the bad government and depraved manners of Ephefus, which was his own country ; does not favour the least of compaffion ; for the whole context, breathes nothing but indignation and resentment. By the fame letters we may perceive, that he was presumptuous in extreme, and alfo arrogant, proud, and a contemner of the reft of mankind. How does this correſpond with the foft, and compaffionate diſpoſition, that is attributed to him ? Finally, it is a fact well eſtabliſhed, that from his diſguſt to, and loathing of mankind, he retired from the world, to lead a ſolitary life in the mountains. All this, beſpeaks a man of a perverſe, unfociable, and gloomy genius, and proves, that Heraclitus deſerved the character that had been given of him by Timon of Athens, which was that of a *Mifanthrope*; and means, *that he was an enemy to, or an abhorrer of mankind.*

XIV. But whether Heraclitus was generally crying or lamenting, as is commonly thought ; or agreeable to my opinion of him, was continually growling and ſnarling, it amounts to the ſame thing, for the uſe I propoſe to make of the premiſes, which is to manifeſt, that Heraclitus
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and Democritus, were excited by distinct affections, because their attentions, were confined to distinct objects; and without entering into, whether the lamentation, or indignation, whichever it shall be thought fit to call it, of Heraclitus, whose apology I am not writing, was justifiable, I maintain, that the laughter of Democritus was reasonable, and not extravagant. Democritus viewed men on their ridiculous side, and contemplated their absurdities, their follies, their ill-grounded presumptions, their vain desires, and their useless occupations, all of them, as objects worthy to be laughed at; for as Aristotle says, all turpitude that does not occasion sadness, is laughable and ridiculous, *turpitude sine dolore*. The follies and vanities of man being then a sort of turpitudes, which do not produce grief in him, but rather tend to make him contented and happy in himself; are objects worthy to be laughed at.

XV. Yes. But laughter, although it may be directed to a proper object, may be carried to excess; and perhaps this was the fault that was reprehended in Democritus. To this I answer, that the accusation, even considered in this sense, is founded on a mere equivocation. The laughter of Democritus, which has been so largely cried out against, did not favour so much of a habit,

habit, as of a dogma; and ought more properly to be considered as applying to an object, than looked upon as a distinct act. This philosopher was distinguished from the rest, not because he laughed more than all the others, but for placing his especial attention on the absurdities of mankind; and the singular maxim, that human things tended more to excite laughter, than indignation or compassion, made a principal part of his moral doctrine. It was easy to imagine, that a philosopher must be much addicted to laugh, who philosophized in this way; and from conceiving him much inclined to laugh, it was easy also for them to proceed to supposing that he was laughing every minute; but his solitary disposition, and retired life, afford an efficacious proof to the contrary. Who ever knew a man that was much inclined to retirement, who was of a very laughable disposition? These two things, seem absolutely incompatible with each other. He who has a great propensity to laughing, seeks occasions to gratify that inclination, and these are to be found in the company of other men, and not in solitude.

XVI. From a story that is related of him by Lucian, I am persuaded, that Democritus was more disposed to be serious than jolly. He was
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used to say, that all the stories of spectres, phantoms, and apparitions, were fabulous and ridiculous; and certain young fellows, to try whether these were his real sentiments, or else with a view of making him alter them, entered his room in the dead of night, with frightful masks on their faces, and habited in the garb of devils, to which terrible appearances, they added horrible shrieks and cries, accompanied by terrifying gestures. Democritus, who was writing when they entered his room, far from seeming surprized, without lifting the pen from his paper, and without even deigning to pay any attention to them, in a severe tone bid them hold their noise, or else go and make it in some other place, and without articulating another word, he betook himself again to his writing. What, if Democritus had been of a risible disposition, could have been more likely than such a scene to have excited him to laughter; for he well knew the appearances were all feigned, and a jocular derision would have been the best rebuke he could have given them for such an attempt. Finally, that spectacle afforded abundant matter proper to excite laughter, for it might truly be called turpitude, *unattended by sadness*. Why then did not Democritus laugh? Why did he not scoff at, and treat them with jocular contempt? Why without doubt, because

because he was not of a bantering, or laughable disposition.

XVII. I will not dispute, that Democritus might sometimes affect to laugh, in order to open a door, for the introduction of his animadversions on the absurdities of mankind; but affected laughter is not incompatible with, nor does it tend to annihilate serious truth. I will also admit, that at sometimes when he laughed in earnest, his laughter might border on the extravagant. Democritus considered many of the actions of men as ridiculous, which others regarded as reasonable, and considered as foolish, many, which others looked upon as discreet: Democritus would laugh at such, and other men who did not discern like him the absurdity of the things he laughed at, might look upon him as a ridiculous man for so doing.

XVIII. In the first discourse of our first volume, we made mention of three letters of Hippocrates, which gave a relation of his having been sent for by the Abdarites, to cure their country-man Democritus, who, on account of his bursting into fits of impertinent and unmeaning laughter, they concluded was mad. In those letters, there is also a relation given of Hippocrates's visit to him, and of the conversation that passed between Hippocrates and Democritus at that

that visit, and the result of the interview between them; which was, that Hippocrates esteemed him ever afterwards, as a man supremely wise and learned. This might serve as a confirmation of all we have said respecting Democritus; but as I am a lover of truth, I will not scruple to acknowledge, that since my writing of that discourse, I have come to understand, that there are many critics, who are inclined to think those letters are supposititious; and therefore I will not pretend to avail myself of them further, than as of a testimony, whose authenticity may be disputed.

XIX. But I must beg leave to remark one thing; which is, that in the beforementioned discourse, there is an expression of mine, which may be construed to imply, that I thought the laughter of Democritus inclining to the excessive; but to avoid being accused of falling into contradictions, I thought it necessary to repeat here, an observation I have made upon other occasions; which is, that I am not accustomed to express my particular opinion upon any matter, respecting which I think differently from the vulgar, unless it is when I treat expressly of that matter; but when I touch upon a thing incidentally, it is a rule with me, to fall in with the common opinion concerning that thing. This is a method I found

found absolutely necessary to adopt, in order to avoid interrupting the thread of my discourse, and incumbering it with foreign matter and new questions.

XX. They have set up another story against Democritus, which, if there was any foundation for, would more effectually prove his want of understanding, than all the bursts of laughter that have been imputed to him. Many authors, and among them Aulus Gellius, relate, that Democritus having considered, that the sight of many sensible objects diverts the understanding from contemplating natural things with proper attention, put out both his eyes, to qualify himself for reflecting upon them with greater profundity, and more intensely. I will readily acknowledge, that such a resolution, could only be taken by a man of a depraved understanding. *Illud quidem falso jactatum est de Democrito, quod sponte sibi ademerit oculos, &c.* (Lib. de Curiosit.) What necessity was there, in order to remove the impediment arising from sensible objects, for his putting out both his eyes? Would not shutting himself in a dark room, whenever he was disposed to study, have answered the same purpose. The poet Laberius, who takes the thing for granted, assigns another reason for his blinding himself. He says, that Democritus put out both his eyes, to avoid seeing the prosperity of
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bad men; as if he could not as well have enjoyed this satisfaction, by retiring from all commerce or intercourse with the world; besides, a man's blinding himself for such a reason, argues a sour, morose, and furious disposition, instead of a pleasant and chearful one, which Democritus was said to possess. Nor is what Tertullian advances more probable, who says, he blinded himself because he could not bear to look at women without emotions of incontinence, nor without being vexed if it happened he could not enjoy them. Nothing could be more foreign than this to the genius of Democritus, of whom it is an established fact, that he was always averse to matrimony. Such fables can be but feebly supported, when the truth is enquired into and sought after with attention.

E P I C U R U S.

S E C T. III.

XXI. This philosopher flourished in the times, in which the fire of emulation began to burn among the masters and disciples of the various schools of philosophy, who mutually waged war against each other, by making false interpretations of the doctrines that each maintained, and by raising false accusations against one another's customs

customs and manners. In the first place, many look upon Aristotle as a notorious calumniator; but in the second place, they remark that he was amply repaid in his own coin, for that he was egregiously calumniated himself. I find more appearances of malice in the calumnies raised against Epicurus, than in those raised against any of the other philosophers. Epicurus placed extreme felicity in enjoyment; which was an equivocal doctrine, for, considered in a latitudinary sense, it might be construed to mean both honest and criminal enjoyments. The vulgar, when they hear the word enjoyment, are apt to impute an evil signification to it, because, agreeable to their gross ideas, they hardly consider any other things as enjoyments, but unbounded indulgences, in incontinence and debauchery; or they at least, are inclined to consider these as the greatest of all enjoyments. This gross construction of his doctrines by the vulgar, gave encouragement to his rivals to stigmatize his tenets, and to accuse him, of placing all happiness in sensuality and gluttony. It was an easy matter, to transfer the accusation against his doctrines, to militate against his customs and manners; because it being evident, that all men have an innate desire to make themselves happy; consequently, Epicurus must be understood studiously to recommend those objects to them, in which he thought happiness to consist. By attributing to

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him then this perverse dogma, the inference drawn from it was, that he led a life which corresponded with the tenet; that is, that it was all spent in lewdness, gluttony, and drunkenness.

XXII. Besides the before-mentioned cause, there were two others, that concurred to blacken the fame of Epicurus. The first was, his erroneous and impious opinion with respect to the Deity; for he held, that it consisted of a multiplicity of gods, which he maintained were indolent, unable to do, and having no power of doing, either good or harm to any one; and were without providence, without activity, and without influence; and although he acknowledged they had a right to be worshiped, he attributed the obligation we are under of paying them adoration, to be due to the excellence of their nature, intirely distinct, and separate from all dependence we have on them, or gratitude that we owe to them; and that the obsequies we pay them, should be like the respect we pay to a nobleman, on whom we have no dependence, and from whose favour we entertain no expectations; and which we consider, as a thing due to his quality. I grant, that this afforded a powerful motive for entertaining a bad opinion, both of the moral doctrine, and the manners of Epicurus; for if you take away the fear of punishment, and the hope

hope of reward from mankind, you can find but little expectation, that they will esteem, or practise virtue.

XXIII. The second cause which tended to discredit Epicurus, was the loose manner in which some of his followers lived; who, by perverting the doctrine of their master, and construing it to favour their vicious inclinations, persuaded many people, that Epicurus had taught what they asserted he had taught, and that he had lived as they did.

XXIV. Notwithstanding all these prejudices against him, the cause of Epicurus was not looked upon as so hopeless and forlorn, as to deter some authors of eminence from undertaking his defence, which they did with good success. Among these, we see stand forth in the foremost ranks, our famous Don Francisco de Quevedo, who, from the clear testimonies of many enlightened men of antiquity, proves in the first place, that Epicurus did not place happiness in corporeal, but in spiritual enjoyments; and secondly, that this philosopher, so far from being given to gluttony, was very sparing in his diet, both with respect to his meat and his drink, living for the most part upon bread, water, cheese, and the produce of his own garden; and thirdly, that he lived chastly,

and abstained from venereal indulgencies. As the works of Quevedo are almost in the hands of every body, I shall omit a repetition of the testimonies he produces in favour of Epicurus. But to those he mentions, I shall add two others of great weight, which he has not taken notice of. The first is, that of St. Gregory Nazianzenus, who in his Iambics, applauds highly, both the moral doctrine, and the life of Epicurus. These are his words :

*Ipsam voluptatem putavit præmium
Epicurus extare omnibus laboribus,
Mortaliumque tendere huc bona omnia,
Ac ne ob voluptatem improbam hanc laudari
Quis crederet, moderatus, et castus fuit,
Dum vixit, ille, dogma moribus probant.*

In English :

Epicurus thought that pleasure was the reward of all toils, and that this was the object or completion of all mortal good. But that no one should conclude he meant to recommend vicious enjoyments, it will be proper to observe, that through the whole course of his life, he was temperate and chaste, and proved what his dogmas were intended to inculcate by his manners.

XXV. The authority of this father, is of great weight

weight in this matter, because he studied in Athens, where Epicurus had fixed his habitation and his school; and therefore it is probable, had an opportunity of obtaining some authentic testimonies, both of his doctrine and manner of living. This should mollify, or abate the force of the objection that is made to Epicurus, by reason of the terms of contempt and reproach, in which Saint Austin, Saint Ambrosius, and Saint Isidorus speak of him; who having always lived at a great distance from Athens, may have given this account of him, upon the credit of uncertain memoirs; and might possibly have been induced to think, that some things were the productions of Epicurus, which were falsely attributed to him by Diotimus, who was a Stoic philosopher, and his declared enemy.

XXVI. The second testimony which Quevedo has omitted to mention, is that of the philosopher Chrysipus, who was contemporary with, and an avowed enemy and rival of Epicurus, and as such, should be believed with respect to every thing he testifies in his favour. Chrysipus then, as quoted by Stobæus, admits that Epicurus was endowed with chastity, although he malignantly insinuates, that it proceeded from a cause, that was an opprobrium to his character, for he attributes it, to his insensibility or stupidity. These

two philosophers, lived in Athens at one and the same time; and as his neighbour and his rival, Chrysipus could not have been ignorant of the vices of Epicurus; and if he had been lascivious, it is very clear, that he would not have allowed he was continent. As he could not then deny he was chaste, he gives his malice another turn, and says, that his continence was not the effect of his virtue, but of his stupidity,

XXVII. Finally, I shall urge against the calumniators of Epicurus, an argument, that appears to me of great weight and efficacy: Diogenes Laertius relates, that the writings of Epicurus were innumerable; and that there was no author of antiquity, who had compiled such a multitude of books. *Scriptit autem Epicurus infinita volumina, adeo ut illorum multitudine cunctos superaverit.* (Diog. Laert. lib. 10.) Let any man now who is the most prejudiced against Epicurus, tell me whether it is likely, that a man who placed his whole happiness in corporeal gratifications and enjoyments, and must consequently have given himself up to gluttony, drunkenness, and lust, could possibly have written so many books. It is plain and evident that he could not; because his debaucheries would have prevented him for the greatest part of his time, from being able to pursue his studies, and from
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taking pen in hand, and must at last, have come to incapacitate him totally, as such debaucheries commonly do those, who lead that brutal kind of life.

XXVIII. There remains something still for us to reply to, that has been advanced on the three beforementioned heads, which are the articles; on which the calumniators of Epicurus, principally ground their accusations against him. The first thing he is charged with, is easily answered, because it is generally allowed, that Epicurus lived sparingly, and was sober and continent; from whence it may be evidently inferred, that he could not place his whole happiness, in the delights of gluttony and sensuality. He wished to be happy; which is a desire, that from invincible necessity, attends every man; and consequently, if he had thought happiness consisted in corporeal enjoyments, he would industriously have sought after and embraced them. But let us delineate this matter, with greater nicety and exactness.

XXIX. There are two things to be considered in the doctrine of Epicurus; the one certain, the other questionable: the certain one is, what species of enjoyment it was, in which he thought happiness consisted. With regard to the first of

these points, so far was he from falling in with, or adopting gross ideas, that it was always remarked, he expressed himself with more delicacy and propriety, and also more philosophically, than any of the philosophers of Paganism; some of whom make happiness to consist in riches, others in dominion, others in honours, others in health, others in fame, &c. Generally, if you attend to them, besides their erring in fundamentals, they reason with great impropriety, because they sometimes mistake for happiness, the object that produced it; and at others, the instrument that procured it. Epicurus, explains the matter in a direct way, and agreeable to the nature and essence of the thing itself, and not by its causes. He constitutes happiness, to consist in an act of the soul, and in this, all our most eminent theologians agree with him, and some of them likewise concur with him, with respect to the species of the act; for they, like Epicurus, place formal felicity, in delight, enjoyment, or fruition. This is a sentiment, which although it is not the most approved in the schools, seems to be upheld by those great authorities, Saint Austin, and Saint Thomas. Saint Austin in his first book de Doctrin. Christ. cap. 32, says, that the supreme reward which God bestows, is in the enjoyment of him: *Hæc autem merces summa est, ut eo perfruamur*; and in his eighth book de Civit. cap. 9. he expresses himself

himself to this effect, that no one can be happy who does not enjoy his beloved object: *Nemo beatus est, qui eo quod amat non fruitur.* Saint Thomas 1. 2. quæst. 33. art. 3. in corp. distinguishing between the ultimate objective, and formal end of man, says, *that the first is God, and the second fruition, or act of enjoying God; in which is included, the delight of possessing the ultimate end, and in this sense it may be said, that enjoyment is the summum bonum of man. Optimum in unaquaque re est ultimus finis. Finis autem, ut supradictum est, dupliciter dicitur, scilicet ipsa res, et usus rei, sicut finis avari est, vel pecunia, vel passio pecuniæ, et secundum hoc ultimus finis hominis dici potest, vel ipse Deus, qui est summum bonum simpliciter, vel fruitio ipsius, quæ importat delectationem quandam in ultimo fine; et per hunc modum aliqua delectatio hominis potest dici optimum inter bona humana.*

Supposing then that Epicurus did not err, in placing all human felicity in enjoyment, all that can be urged against him is, that he mistook in assigning the object of this enjoyment; and I acknowledge that he did err in this particular; but at the same time that I make this acknowledgment, I must beg leave to alledge two things in his favour: the first is, that if he did err, his error was not accompanied with any dishonest design

sign that tended to corrupt the manners of mankind: the second is, that he erred less than any of the other Gentile philosophers. In the first place, besides the testimonies we before produced, of the sobriety and continence of Epicurus, the thing is proved by his own writings. Among the few, which by the diligence of Diogenes Laertius have been rescued from oblivion; is his letter to Meeus, where he expounds his whole moral doctrine, and clearly points out and inculcates, that the enjoyment he means to assign as the constitutive principle of happiness, is that, which results from the blessings of health, bodily ease, and tranquillity of mind; but positively excludes indulgences in forbidden pleasures. The following words of his, which refute the malignant interpretation that has been put upon his doctrine, by his rivals, and many ignorant people, deserve particular attention: *Constat igitur, quando voluptatem; beatæ vitæ dicimus finem, non intelligere nos eas voluptates, quæ sunt virorum luxu diffuentium, aut aliorum etiam, quatenus spectantur in ipsa actione fruendi, qua nimirum sensus jucundè, dulciterque afficitur, veluti quiddam ignorantes, aut a nobis dissentientes, aut alioquin adversum nos male affecti interpretantur; sed illud dumtaxat intelligimus, non dolere corpore, ac animo non perturbari. Siquidem non compotationes comestationesque perpetuæ, non ipsa puerorum mulierumque consuetudo, non*
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piscium deliciae, aut quaecumque aliae mensae lautioris cupiditae jucundam vitam pariunt, sed quae cum sobrietate, sereneque adeo animo, est ratio, causas, cur quid eligendum, fugiendumve sit, investigans, ac opiniones abigens, ob quas plurima mentes occupat perturbatio.

XXXI. This doctrine, does not tend to promote any irregularity whatever in human life, for health of body, and serenity of mind, may very lawfully be wished for by any man; and there are men very spiritually disposed, who positively desire them, and are also solicitous about procuring them. It is however a mistaken notion, to place ultimate, or supreme felicity, in the enjoyment of them; but this is an error, which was common to all the Gentile philosophers, who everyone of them, placed it on created objects. I say also, that the error of Epicurus in this respect, was less than that of any of the others, because he was at least right, with regard to the object on which he placed happiness, by speaking of it, as confined to sublunary things; but the other philosophers, did not even hit this nail on the head: for if we contemplate a man possessed of all those advantages, in which they maintained happiness consisted, such as riches, honours, fame, learning, &c. he may notwithstanding his possessing all these, lead a very unhappy and miserable life; because neither of
them

them separately, nor all of them put together, can secure him from a thousand afflictions, that may be brought upon him, by numberless adverse accidents. For, suppose him to be learned, rich, and powerful, to whatever degree you please, none of these, can prevent the death of his esteemed friend; nor the infidelity of his beloved wife; nor can they insure him, that his children shall not turn out stupid or ill-disposed; nor can they shield him, from the stings and mortifications he is exposed to, from the malice of envious people, &c. But by attaining what Epicurus held happiness to consist in, that is health of body, and serenity of mind, a man, let what will happen to him, would at least live free from misery, and so long as he preserves these blessings of bodily health, and a serene state of mind, may be said to be a happy person, because he experiences no affliction, or anxiety.

XXXII. In opposition to this, some may reply, that the tenets of Zeno and the Stoics, who place all happiness in the practice of virtue, should be preferred to those of Epicurus. To which I answer, that this doctrine has a fine sound, but that it is false and ridiculous in the fundamental parts of it. I firmly believe, that the Stoics were the least sincere of all the ancient philosophers. A great critic of recent date, very humourously and properly called them the Pharisees of Paganism.

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The name of virtue was ever in their mouths, and the virtue they preached up, was of the most austere kind; but notwithstanding this, they in fact were as solicitous to promote their own temporal interests and convenience, as the most worldly of mankind. Seneca, that bright pattern of, and esteemed honour to the Stoic school, at the same time that he rolled in riches, and was living in the highest stile of pomp, and with the greatest profusion of luxury, to say nothing of his usury, vociferated loudly in favour of poverty; which strongly evinces, that the Stoics, without the exception of even Seneca himself, were hypocrites, who did not believe it was possible for any one to practise, the very virtue they had preached up. They would have had a learned and a wise man, arrive at being an insensible one; who while he was suffering the greatest torments, should appear cheerful and serene; and that he should seem no more affected with all the vexations that can be given him by mankind, than the sun seems to be, with the arrows that are discharged against Heaven; or, than the gods are with the blows that are given to their statues. Both the one and the other of these families, are made use of by Seneca; from whence, it may evidently be inferred, that the virtue he recommended, was not only an ideal, but a chimerical one. The behaviour of Dionysius of Heraclea, shews very plainly, the extravagance of the Stoic philosophy. This philosopher, was for a long while

while a disciple and a sectary of Zeno's, during all which time, he enjoyed a good state of health; but became afterwards afflicted with a severe disorder in his eyes, or as some say, in his kidneys; and indeed Cicero mentions them both: and finding that it was impossible under these afflictions, for him to enjoy that calmness and serenity of mind, which was so much recommended by Zeno, he abandoned his master's school, and gave himself up to all sorts of debauchery.

XXXIII. Virtue is not only good, but even capable of making a man happy, if considered as a means; but contemplated according to the system of the Stoics, as the sum of all happiness, independent of any reward, except what results from itself, it is arduous and toilsome. I suppose that Saint Paul, was full as virtuous a man, as either Seneca or Zeno. And what did he say of virtue, as standing by itself, and considered, without relation to the reward of eternal happiness? Why the very reverse of what was said by those philosophers: *Si in hac vita tantum in Christo sperantes sumus, miserabiliores sumus omnibus hominibus*, (1 ad Corinth. 15.) *If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.* And why the most miserable? can it be because we are the most virtuous?

XXXIV.

XXXIV. The point of religion, is the most tender one in all the doctrine of Epicurus. He admitted that there were gods, but maintained, that they had no hand in the direction, or management of human affairs. I, in truth, can conceive no error more absurd, than that of denying the existence of a deity, except it is, that of admitting there is such a being, and denying his providence. Some suppose that Epicurus, thought differently from what he spoke on this subject; that is, that he did not believe in the Heathen divinities; but, only acknowledged their existence, for fear of being punished if he had done otherwise. But the truth is, that he frequented the temples, and assisted devoutly at the sacrifices, in so much, that Diogenes Laertius, extols him for his eminent devotion to, and respect for the gods: *Sanctitatis quidem in Deos, et charitatis in patriam fuit in eo affectus ineffabilis.* I say, some suppose that this was all hypocrisy: it may have been so, but there seems no reason to suspect, that he did not both speak and act with sincerity. For, admitting there have been philosophers, who have denied the existence of any deity, there can be no great difficulty in supposing, that there might be another, who conceived the existence of such a sort of deity only, as was idle and inactive, and who was a titular or honorary being, that was happy in himself, and divested

divested of all care. The conceptions of men, are exceedingly strange and various; of which truth, we have an instance in Pliny the elder. This great man, who was sufficiently enlightened to be convinced, that the gods the Gentiles worshipped, were fabulous; and to be fully satisfied, that if there was a God, it must be one only God: yet, notwithstanding all this, he fell into the same error that Epicurus did; for, he said positively, that in case there was such a deity, he never interfered either little or much, with human affairs: and asserted, that it was ridiculous for any man to suppose he did: *Irridendum verò agere curam rerum humanarum illud quid quid est summum.* But what is more, he looked upon this neglect of the government of the world, not as a defect, but as an excellence, precisely appertaining to the deity; and declared, that the admitting of his providence, was a degradation of his dignity: *Anne tam tristi, multiplicique ministerio non pollui credamus, dubitemusve?* If then one of the greatest men of antiquity, which Pliny unquestionably was, conceived inaction to be a perfection necessarily belonging to the deity, why should we be surprized that Epicurus adopted the same error? He, let this proceed from what principle it would, either the extravagance of his imagination, or artifice to disguise what

what the Athenians held to be impiety, lived unmolested in Athens, nor was there ever any prosecution instituted against him in that city, on the score of religion. If Diagoras had conducted himself in the same manner, he might have vented his furious choler, without danger of the Athenians pursuing him with fire and sword, and setting a price upon his head by proclamation; but this philosopher having continued for the greatest part of his life, superstitiously devoted to the gods, when he was advanced in years, all of a sudden turned Atheist; and his motive for doing this, was one of the most ridiculous in the world. Diagoras, was both a philosopher and a poet; and it happened, that one of the same profession, had purloined from Diagoras, certain verses which he had composed; for this, he convened him before the judges to answer for the plagiarism; where the accused person was examined upon oath; and he swore falsely, that the verses were of his own composing. Diagoras could produce no witnesses to prove the fact against him, so the man was acquitted, and afterwards published the verses as his own, receiving the applauses for them, which were properly due to Diagoras; whose indignation was so inflamed at this, that it in a manner turned his head; and he, in the fulness of his wrath, began to write against the

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Grecian deities; and to publish to the world, that it was the most foolish thing imaginable, to suppose that there were gods; for if such beings had existed, they, instead of suffering the man who had injured him, to be crowned with unjust applause, would either not have permitted, or else would have punished his insolence. I say, that Diagoras, by adopting the theological system of Epicurus, might have vented his anger without endangering his head; as for the purpose of letting wickedness go unpunished, and reign triumphant in the world, the want of providence in the deity, would have the same effect, as the actual want of a deity, and the Athenians would have winked at that blasphemy, as they did at the blasphemy of Epicurus.

XXXV. But what is most to the point, will be to examine whether the theological error of Epicurus tended to produce any consequences, that might promote the disorderly life, which his rivals attribute, and which is vulgarly imputed to him. I confess, that he who would say of a man, who denies the existence of a deity, or if he admits of his existence, denies his providence, that he is a person of perverse manners, would generally be right in his judgment with regard to the facts, but would mistake
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in point of the propriety of his decision, if he only considered the error as the necessary consequence of an erroneous dogma. The reason is, because there are men who are without vices, only because they are without passions; and temperament has the same effect with them, that virtue has with other people. Vice necessarily supposes a man to be actuated by a depraved inclination, and the desires depend on the complexion of the individual. Thus he who is naturally of a very placid disposition, seldom shews any inclination to run into the excesses, of either gluttony, or lust, and whether he believed there was, or was not a God, and that if there was, he would not punish those excesses, he would still be temperate and chaste. I say the same of all other vices, and vicious passions. In reality, an atheist of good customs and manners, if he is a monster, is a monster we have sometimes seen. Pliny doubted whether there was a Deity, or if he did not doubt it, disbelieved his Providence; but with all this, nobody could cast the least imputation on his customs or manners; for he was temperate, sincere, and a lover of justice; and his writings are full of invectives against vice, which are expressed with such force and energy, that we can hardly doubt of their coming from his heart. To sum up the whole, two of the

best emperors that were known in Rome in the days of paganism, Titus, and Vespasian, esteemed him much, and always confided to him most important employments. The famous atheist of these latter times, Benito Spinosa, always led a retired life, and kept himself constantly employed, either in study, or making telescopes and microscopes, and was a sober, continent, and pacific man. There were strong suspicions of atheism, against the Englishman Thomas Hobbes, but he never was accused of being addicted to any vice. Then why might not Epicurus, notwithstanding his mistaken faith, have lived exempt from the vices, of which he has been vulgarly accused? and this being not improbable, why should not we believe he did so, upon the credit of the many and grave testimonies that have been exhibited in his favour? If to this it should be replied, that the lives of atheists were made up of mere appearances, and deceptions, to escape either infamy or punishment; I answer, that for my purpose, this is sufficient, for that I never meant to insist, that Epicurus was a man truly virtuous, but only to shew, that what had been said of the turpitude of his moral doctrines, and of his gluttonies, and obscenities, was false and groundless.

XXXVI. The

XXXVI. The last presumptive charge against Epicurus, which is founded upon the dissolute lives of some of his sectaries, is totally contemptible. The argument urged against Epicurus, that some of the debauched pupils of his school interpreted his doctrines in favour of vice, is like that which is brought against the catholic church, on account of some introducers of novelties, having misunderstood or misinterpreted the gospel. There were two sorts of Epicureans known to antiquity, one of which were termed the rigid, and the others the relaxed ones. These last, were considered as the heretics of Epicurianism, and as deserters of the doctrine of Epicurus, although they retained the name of his sectaries. The authority of Cicero seems strongly to confirm this sentiment, who (lib. 2. de Finibus) says; *Ac mihi quidem quod et ipse (Epicurus) bonus vir fuit, et multi Epicurei fuerunt, et hodie sunt, et amicitiiis fideles, et in omni vita constantes, et graves, nec voluptate, sed consilio consilia moderantes, hoc videtur major vis honestatis, et minor voluptatis.* If Epicurus then, was a good and an honest man, why should not those who under the name of his sectaries, led scandalous lives, be rejected as bastard Epicureans? And if among those who were called his sectaries, there were many good men, although there were many bad ones like-

wife ; which of these should we esteem as the true and sincere expounders of the doctrine of Epicurus ? ought it to be the first, or the last ?

PLINY THE ELDER.

S E C T. IV.

XXXVII. Pliny makes but a poor figure, in the eye of the inferior class of literary people, who look upon him as no better than an artful impostor, that filled his natural history with improbable tales. This has been occasioned principally, by some authors who are a kind of secret-mongers, and who deal in the marvellous, and have, in order to give a sanction to their writings, quoted the authority of Pliny, to justify many of the wonderful tales they relate; but these have not only quoted Pliny for what he never said, but have also had the effrontery to make use of his name, to patronize stories which he point-blank contemns and reprobates. Pliny frequently makes mention of the wonderful secrets, or strange operations of magic, but he always does it with derision and contempt ; and treats the authors of them as mountebanks and impostors. I have always said, and I won't retract

tract my assertion; that you will not find in all Pliny, mention made of any secret of the portentous kind (and he relates many of that sort) which he does not reprobate as a ridiculous tale, and an absurd fiction, generally invented by those who call themselves magicians. Now what is the practice of the dealers in these kinds of secrets? Why they say, that they extracted the relations they give of them from the works of Pliny, but fraudulently conceal that Pliny, made a joke of them. How many silly people have been led to imagine, that there are those that can make themselves invisible whenever they please, and that the great secret of doing this, consists in carrying about them, what they call the sun-flower-stone, together with the plant that bears the same name. This wonderful receipt, may be seen in Pliny (lib. 37. cap. 10.) but you will also find there annexed to it, by Pliny, the strongest censure that can be expressed; for he says, that an extravagance of this kind is a clear proof, of the assurance and want of modesty in those who are called magicians, and shews plainly, to what a degree they are capable of lying. *Magorum impudentiæ, vel manifestissimum in hos quosque, (that is the sun-flower-stone) exemplum est.* He expresses himself to the same effect, in every other part of his writings where he speaks of magicians. In his thirtieth book, cap. 1. in one short sentence

only, he condemns the whole farago of magical operations, and calls magic the most deceitful and fallacious of all arts, *fraudentissima artium*.

XXXVIII. Even of the lesser sort of secrets, which do not border upon the incredible, such as medicinal ones commonly are, he speaks with so much circumspection, that he scarce ever says any thing affirmatively respecting them. He always, or nearly always, speaks doubtfully of them, and uses the terms, it is so said, or it is so believed; *dicunt, tradunt*, &c. and very often, he names the author who makes mention of them,

XXXIX. But as those are very few who know Pliny in his own works, and only see the miserable extracts that are made from them by puffing crafty people, they are led from thence to conclude, that Pliny was the author of all the ridiculous fictions that are imputed to him, by which means, this great writer has incurred the vulgar ignominious note, of being a man of little veracity, and one who could not be depended on.

XL. The worst is, (and although I could wish to conceal it, the sacred reverence due to truth

truth obliges me to declare it) that not only secret-mongers, and mountebank puffers, have brought Pliny into this disesteem, but even authors of a very different character, have greatly contributed to discredit him. In how many philosophical writings, in how many printed sermons, and in how many moral and mystical essays, have we seen Pliny quoted as the legitimate author, of this or that fabulous tale? I am willing to believe, that the greatest part of them quote him, without the least design of injuring his fame, and relate what they say, from the quotations of others. But God defend us from a little preacher of bagateles, having it in his power to bring Pliny into contempt, because some things which improperly go under his name, apply aptly as similies, or allusions to his chimeras; I say God defend us in such cases, that he, by quoting Pliny, should be enabled to shelter himself under his authority, as if the things he mentions came immediately from him!

XLI. Another cause of the discredit of Pliny, is the multitude of natural prodigies, which are for the most part false, that we find related in his history, especially those of monsters of a strange appearance, such as pigmies, men without heads, and with their eyes in their shoulders; others with
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canine or dogs heads; others again, who had only one eye, that was placed in the middle of their foreheads; others, with their feet turned backwards; others with two pupils to each eye; others, with feet so large, that they were capable of shading their whole bodies; others, who see better by night than by day; and of whole nations of Hermaphrodites; of a people, who support themselves wholly by smelling to perfumes; and of another people, where all the individuals are witches and wizards, &c. But as the Europeans of late years, have penetrated into, and explored nearly all the provinces of the world, but have found none of these species of monsters, some have suspected that they were all the children of Pliny's brain, and others have been led to think, that Pliny had been indiscreet enough to believe them, upon the relations of lying travellers.

XLII. It is possible to refute, both the one and the other of these calumnies, and to support the refutation by good evidence. In the first place, Pliny subjoins to every one of these stories, the author from whom he took it. Secondly, prior to his giving the account of the multitude of prodigies he relates, he protests that he does not pledge himself as a voucher for the truth of them; and immediately refers the reader to the works of the authors
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from whence they were taken, that by examining them, he may have an opportunity of informing himself more fully, respecting any doubts he may entertain of them; *Nec tamen ego in plerisque eorum obstringam fidem meam, potiusque ad auctores relegabo, qui dubiis reddentur omnibus.*

XLIII. By way of summing up the defence of Pliny, we shall here recite the opinion, which some very learned men, and critics of the first note, have entertained, both of him and his natural history. Celsus Rhodiginus, calls Pliny *a most learned man*, and adds, *that none but unlearned ones, disrelish his writings.* Gerard John Vossius, calls his history *a great work, and one that can never be sufficiently applauded.* Joseph Scaliger, pronounces that the natural history of Pliny, *on account of its being so great and excellent, is not relished by vulgar understandings*; Lanfius, gives it the title of the Library of Nature; and Angelo Politianus, illustrates it with the epithet of a collection of all memorable things, and calls the author, *the supreme judge of ingenuity, and a most acute, discreet, and admirable censor.* The Jesuit Drexelius, proclaims him *the most noble panegyrist of nature, and a man of prodigious erudition*; and says in another place, *that he is a*
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most perspicuous scrutinizer, and delineator of nature. Justus Lipsius says, *that there was nothing which Pliny had not read, and which he did not understand, and that his writings comprehended all the learning of the Greeks and Romans put together.* The two eulogiums which remain for us to mention, apply more directly and immediately to the subject of this apology than any of the others. The first is that of Gulielmus Budeus, who gives him the attribute, of a man of the *strictest veracity*, for this is the true meaning of the expression Budeus makes use of, which is, *veritatis antistes*. Thomas Dempster bestows on him the epithets, *of a most diligent and eloquent writer, and a man of incomparable veracity*; and finally pronounces, *that his writings were of more value, than those of all the other antient authors put together.* *Unus omnium instar.* More cannot be said.

LUCIUS APULEIUS.

S E C T. V.

XLIV. I have always wondered, that the enlightened Doctor Gabriel Naudæus, should have taken no notice in his learned book, intituled,

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An apology for great men who have been suspected of magic, of Lucius Apuleius, against whom, the suspicions of magic are much more vulgarized, and with a better foundation of reason, than they are against many others he has mentioned. But let that omission have proceeded from what cause it will, we will at present endeavour to supply the defect, so that this essay may in some sense, be filed an addition to Naudæus's book.

XLV. The rumour of Apuleius being a magician, which began in his life-time, and was propagated after his death, is still preserved in the annals of vulgar literature. It is certain, that Apuleius was accused in form of the crime of magic, before Claudius Maximus, the proconsul of Africa; and also, that he acted as his own council and advocate through the whole course of the prosecution; and being a learned and eloquent man, defended himself admirably. This process, was instituted before a Gentile tribunal, where the judge, the culprit, and the accusers, were all pagans. After the death of Apuleius, the Gentiles spread the report of his magic, and the fame of it insinuated itself secretly and by degrees, among the Christians; by whom the tale has since been propagated in books of vulgar

vulgar literature; but has never gained credit with learned men; who did not adopt the error, upon the assertions of ordinary writers; although there is nothing surprizes me more, than the learned Louis Vives, having made no scruple to affirm (*In lib. 18. de Civit. cap. 18.*) that the magic of Apuleius, was a certain, and well established fact.

XLVI. Apuleius was a native of Africa, and studied first in Carthage, afterwards in Athens; and last of all in Rome. He was a man of great ingenuity, and made large advances in a little time; so that in the flower of his youth, he returned to Africa an accomplished scholar, but very poor, he having consumed all his patrimony, in the expences of his travels and his education. His youth, his agreeable person, and his discretion, opened him a door, that afforded him entrance into a life of plenty and accommodation. A rich widow, named Prudentila, was captivated with the wit, and genteel personal appearance of Apuleius, and invited him to live in her house; which invitation ended in her marrying him. The relations of Prudentila's first husband, by whom she had two sons, were much disgusted at this; and although one of the sons, who was named Pontianus, and was nearly arrived at man's estate,

estate, professed a great friendship for Apuleius, and was assistant to him in bringing about the match; he became afterwards the instrument of the indignation of his relations, and joined with his brother and them, in accusing Apuleius of witchcraft. Their first allegation against him was, that he with magic arts, had seduced Prudentila, and won her heart; because that after having lived nine years a widow, without giving the least occasion for any suspicion of her continence, she, when advanced in years, and had sons nearly men grown, would not have had a propensity to matrimony, unless she had been excited to it by some unfair practices. They alledged secondly, that Apuleius superstitiously kept a magical hobgoblin, very carefully wrapt up in a piece of linen; and they alledged thirdly, that he must be an enchanter, for that Prudentila had written him a letter, in which she declared he had enchanted her; and this part of the letter they exhibited, to prove the charge.

XLVII. The reply we shall make to these heads of accusation, is that which Apuleius made himself to the court, and which is still preserved in his works. He treated the first allegation with derision, saying that it was unnecessary for a man possessed of the graces and accomplishments

ments they had assigned him, to practise magic arts, to captivate the heart of a woman of forty years old, for that she was no older, although his accusers had asserted she was sixty. To this he added, that her physicians had advised her to marry, imputing to her continence, some indispositions she laboured under; and said further, that her son Poncianus had advised her, in case she did marry, to take his friend Apuleius for her husband.

XLVIII. In reality, nothing could be more ridiculous than this part of the accusation; but with all this, it was well received and much attended to by the vulgar; who upon perceiving, that a person who in other respects is prudent and cautious, has a passion for one of a different sex, begin immediately in their gossiping conversations, to impute it to magic potions; and this practice or notion is very antient. The same sort of rumour was circulated in Macedonia, against a woman of Thessaly, with whom, Philip the father of Alexander was greatly enamoured; but her absolution from the sin of witchcraft, came from a quarter from whence it might have been least expected, that is, from the injured Olympias, the wife of Philip. This queen contrived means to have the concubine of her husband

band brought into her presence ; and upon viewing her beauty, and the gracefulness of her person, she, without further enquiry, pronounced sentence in her favour ; and said to her, *Ah, my child, how unjustly have you been calumniated, for you have no need of the arts of witchcraft, as your personal charms, added to the sprightliness of mind with which God has endowed you, are sufficient of themselves, to captivate the heart of any man.*

XLIX. Nor is it of any avail to render probable a charge of witchcraft, to alledge, that a person of whose judgment and circumspection we have had long experience, should, in contradiction to the great opinion we had formed of his chastity, have been hurried away by an excessive passion of love, to act diametrically contrary to the former tenor of his conduct ; for such a change, without having recourse to the power of magic, may be accounted for upon very rational and natural principles. There are those, who, but here and there an individual, have sufficient attraction to excite in them such a passion, and they go on to preserve the reputation of being rigorously chaste people, till their fate presents to their view, the steel, that is capable of striking fire into their flinty breasts ; nor, to produce those kind of effects, is there any necessity for having recourse to sympathies, as these

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are things which can't be explained; and all this business is performed by an occult mechanism, whose operations are not to be discerned, altho' it causes the impressions objects make on us at different times, to vary, and produce different affections in us.

L. To the second article of accusation, he answered, that what he kept wrapt up in the piece of linen, was a kind of relique, token, or sacred symbol, of the mysterious worship of a certain deity, and that it had been given to him by some priests in Greece; which he proved in such a manner, as was satisfactory to the judge.

LI. In his reply to the third article of accusation, he loaded his accusers with ignominy, and filled them with confusion. The fact was, that the sentence of the letter of Prudentila, which they exhibited against him, when detached from the context of it, had the meaning which they alledged it to have, but when united to the other parts, and restored to the place from whence it was taken, it had a quite different signification. I shall insert the part of the letter from whence they extracted the sentence. Prudentila, after expostulating with her son Pontianus, and complaining that both he and his brother, incited to it by their relations, had embroiled themselves in
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a vindictive dispute with Apuleius, speaks thus to him: *I having determined to marry, for the reasons I have recited to you, you yourself persuaded me to take Apuleius for a husband, preferable to any other man; and you being also a great admirer of his accomplishments, made him familiarly acquainted with me, for the purpose of bringing about the match; but now that you are stimulated to it by some vindictive and perverse persons, you insist, that Apuleius has suddenly turned magician, and has enchanted me.* It is clear, that this is a manifest irony, and contains a lively reproof of their calumny; but the accusers exhibited no more than these last words of the letter: *Apuleius has suddenly turned magician, and has enchanted me.* Apuleius requested, that the whole letter might be read; and when that was done, the infamous cheat appeared in its proper colours.

LII. These reports of the magic of Apuleius, which did not exceed mere suspicions, and suspicions that were likewise ill founded, and which when they were first raised, were dissipated and driven away by his own masterly justification and defence of himself, revived after his death, and were augmented to such a degree, that at the period in which Christianity began to predominate, they came to be established almost every where by general consent, and by the voice of common fame. This appears from Lactantius, who in his refutation of

the Pagan Hierocles, that was governor of Alexandria, and who, in a treatise he wrote to defeat the arguments of the Christians, which, in support of their faith, they founded on the miracles of Christ, insisted, that Apollonius Thyaneus, by the help of his magic, had done equal or greater things; upon which, Lactantius observes, that he wonders he had not joined to the miracles of Apollonius, those which were said to have been done by Apuleius: *Voluit ostendere Apollonium, vel paria, vel etiam majora fecisse. Mirum quod Apuleium prætermisit, cujus solent, et multa, et mira memorari.* So that in those days, it appears that many miracles were said to have been done by Apuleius, and that he had the fame of being a great magician, and one that could vie, or stand in competition with Apollonius.

LIV. It appears also, that a century after the days of Lactantius, the rumour of the feats of Apuleius and Apollonius still existed, and seemed to have become more prevalent than they were before; and that the Gentiles, to discredit the miracles of Christ, urged the prodigies that had been done by Apollonius and Apuleius, and affirmed, that both the one and the other of them, had done greater things than our Saviour. This is evident, from the letter of Marcellinus to Saint Augustin, in which he requests the

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Saint to answer the objections, the Gentiles made to the miracles of our Saviour, and to refute the arguments they made use of to discredit them, which were founded, on the wonders that had been performed by those two magicians. He says to him: *Precator accesserim, ut ad ea vigilantius respondere dignerit, in quibus, nihil amplius Dominum, quam alij homines facere potuerunt, fecisse, vel gessisse mentiuntur. Apollonium siquidem suum nobis, et Apuleium aliosque magicæ artis homines in medium proferunt, quorum majora contendunt extitisse miracula.* The same thing appears from the second letter of Saint Agustin to Voluffianus, and from his forty-ninth to the presbyter Deogratias.

LIV. But what man of any understanding, would conclude that Apuleius was guilty of witchcraft, upon the depositions of the Gentiles; who, seeing that the truth gained ground, were intent upon nothing, so much as inventing tales and lies to preserve their ancient superstition? They had before this, availed themselves of the history of the deceiver Philostratus, and in order to eclipse the miracles of Christ, had made use of the relations he gave of those of Apollonius; and as one crafty deception generally begets another, they afterwards brought Apuleius upon the theatre of the world as a rival of Christ; but with what foundation? Why, with less, if it was

possible there could be less, than they had for introducing Apolonius; for, of the prodigies performed by this last, there had been a history composed, such a one as it was; but of Apuleius, they knew nothing more, than that he had been reputed a magician; and upon the strength of this rumour, they began to form stories of his portentous feats, for the truth of which says Saint Augustin, *Nulla fideli auctore jactitant*, which is sufficient, to discredit all that has been said of his magical operations.

LV. The arguments we have hitherto mentioned for supposing Apuleius to be a magician, are sufficiently contemptible; but the one we are about to recite, is much more so, because it is founded in gross ignorance; but notwithstanding this, I am inclined to think, that those who at this day believe in the sorceries of Apuleius, do it upon the credit of the story we are going to relate. We find in the works of Apuleius, an ingenious fable, intituled, *The Golden Ass*; in which, Apuleius recites of himself, that when he was upon his travels, he was entertained in the house of a woman of Thessaly, who was a famous witch, and who kept many ointments, which had the virtue of transforming those who rubbed themselves with them, into various shapes, and that he saw her one night, from a place where he had secreted himself, anoint with one of them, which
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transformed her into a screech owl, and that after this was done, she flew immediately out of the window in quest of her gallant, who lived a great way off. Apuleius, excited by a violent curiosity, was tempted to try the effect of the ointment on himself; so he advanced to the cupboard where the ointments were kept, and laying hold of one of the gallipots, began to anoint himself, which he did very plentifully; but as ill-luck would have it, instead of taking hold of the gallipot which would transform him into a screech-owl, he laid his hand upon one, whose contents converted him to a quite different species of bird; upon this he seized on another, the ointment of which, instantly turned him into an ass. The rest of the fable, consists in the recital of many pleasant adventures that happened to him under the form of an ass; and of his being sold and resold to many different masters, some of whom were better, and others worse; and of his undergoing a great variety of hardships; but at last, he was so happy as to meet with some roses, which were the only things capable of restoring him to his natural state, and upon eating a mouthful of them, he instantly recovered it. This is the substance of the fable of *The Golden Ass*; under which figure, Apuleius represents himself to have acted in *propria persona*, and gives an account of many humours and odd things that befell him, while he was thus metamorphosed.

LVI. This fable then, either from having been read without proper attention, or from people's not having had any account of it but by hearsay, but chiefly and principally for want of knowing from whence it originated, has been supposed by many, to have been a true history; and from a belief, that Apuleius had really practised magic arts, they went on to credit that he had been a magician by profession. But there was no mistake, which could have been more easily cleared up. The first sentence of the writing, undeceives us, for the author says, I am going to relate a Grecian fable: *Fabulam Græcanicam incipimus*; and in his preface to the book wherein it is contained, he says; *Sermone isto milesio varias fabulas conferam*; and in reality, the whole complex of accidents and incidents in the tale, clearly shew, that it was a fabrication of ingenious and pleasant fictions. But the strongest argument to acquit Apuleius of magic, in this case, is, that he was not the author of the fable; for the same tale, to which is prefixed the same title, is to be found in the works of Lucian, who long before had written it in Greek; and Apuleius only added to it, some new fictions and particular relations; and in a long digression, he introduced into it, the loves of Psyche and Cupid. Some learned men, have thought that Lucian was not the original author

author of the fable of *The Golden Ass*; but that he abridged it from the works of another Greek writer; called Lucius of Patras, which I have never seen, nor do I know whether the book of *Metamorphoses* of the person whose production they say this fable was, is now existing.

LVII. All we have recited being so clear and plain, is it not amazing, that Saint Augustin should believe, Apuleius wrote the History of the Golden Ass, and that he gave the relation, as of an event, that had really happened to himself? (vid. *lib. 18. de Civit. cap. 18.*) Louis Vives excuses him, by saying, the Saint being little versed in Greek authors, did not know that the same fable had been written before by Lucian. But this observation cannot suppress our astonishment, because from the words of Apuleius himself, without, to elucidate the matter, having recourse to any other author, it is plain and evident, that he related the story as a fiction, because he expressly says in the beginning of it, what I am about to write, is not a history, but a fable.

THE GREAT TAMERLAN.

S E C T. VI.

LVIII. The proper name of this hero, is not Tamerlan, but Timurbec; for thus he was called by his own subjects; and this is the name by which the Persian writers call him. It is true, that some of the Oriental authors call him Timur-lenk; and so Monsieur Herbelot calls him; but others are of opinion, that this last name was affixed to him as a term of reproach by the Turks, who changed the termination *bec*, which signifies prince, into the word *lenk*, which signifies lame; which was done, either because the Turks really thought he was so, or because they feigned him to have been so; or else, the cause of his lameness, was a fiction of their raising, as we shall presently make appear probable. The describing him by the name of Timur-lenk, having been introduced into Europe, it soon became corrupted there into Tamerlan, or Tamorlan, and has been generally made use of by all the European writers, for it is but a few years ago, that we learned from the Oriental authors, his true name. But as calling him either by one name or another,

ther, is a matter of little importance, we shall make use of the name which has been most generally adopted, as by that he will be best known.

LVIX. Tamerlan, without doubt, was one of the most famous conquerors the world ever knew, and deserving to be ranked among the catalogue of the greatest heroes, with the Alexanders and the Cæsars. It may be, that circumstances made the victories of Alexander and Cæsar more remarkable than his; but it is certain, that neither the one nor the other of them, obtained so many as Tamerlan. There is not a single author, who does not acknowledge the great number of his triumphs and victories, and they also unanimously confess, that he was possessed of all the endowments necessary for obtaining them; so that we should not look upon his conquering so many countries, and preserving them after he had acquired them, as owing to a lucky assemblage of fortunate events; or as a gratuitous bequest of fortune; but as a tribute due to his valour, and military and political conduct. But the virtues of the conqueror, have been so blackened with the savage actions of the barbarian, that we have lost the image of the man in the colouring of his picture; because we only find in his character, as it has been drawn by some historians, representations in the
extreme,

extreme, of the hero and the brute; and, in order that his origin should bear proportion with his behaviour, they have made him the son of a poor shepherd, who soon forsaking the occupation of his father, became the leader of a gang of thieves; and by increasing his infamous band to the size of an army, found himself in a condition to plunder kingdoms, and dethrone princes.

LX. As the account of all these particulars came to Europe immediately from Turkey, which is a country, where they detest every thing belonging to Persia, there is no doubt to be made, but all, or nearly all, the Turks have said to blacken the character of Tamerlan, was an invention of their own; who, besides the general hatred they bear to the Persians, view with a particular envious eye, the prince, who above all others, has humbled the Ottoman pride. To detect the imposture of these relations, I shall have recourse to those Persian authors, whom Monsieur Herbelot quotes in his *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, and the extract from it of the History of Tamerlan, which is inserted in the *Memoirs of Trevoux*, translated from the Persian by Monsieur Petit Lacroix.

LX. In the first place, what is said of his mean extraction, is false; for the Oriental authors, which Messieurs Herbelot and Petit Lacroix quote, describe

scribe him as a person most nobly born, and of kingly descent. Cheref Eddin Ali, who is the author Monsieur Petit Lacroix translated, says, that his father was a sovereign prince in a part of Transoxana, and that his territories were in Scythia or Asiatic Tartary; also, that upon Tamerlan's succeeding to the sovereignty, he married the sister of Houssein, king of Transoxana.

LXI. Proceeding from the birth of Tamerlan, to treat of his customs and manners, I must premise, that I don't pretend to represent him as having all the accomplishments of a perfect hero; but those would swerve as far from the truth, who were to paint him as an infernal fury, and a barbarian, destitute of all humanity and good faith; and as one, whose whole behaviour proclaimed, that he was actuated by no other motives, than those of brutal pride, savage cruelty, and blind rage. Tamerlan, without doubt, was extremely ambitious; and this was his ruling vice. But how much more virtuous than him in this particular, were those, who have been celebrated as consummate heroes, by the unanimous consent of ages? And what is more, it was the vice of ambition which gained them the reputation of heroes. If Alexander had not been unboundedly ambitious, he would never have acquired more applause in the world, than many of the other kings of Macedonia. Cæsar, without ambition, might have been
equally

equally a great captain ; but, divested of his ambition, would never have made so much eclat in the world.

LXIII. There was certainly a great difference, between the characters of these two heroes, and that of Tamerlan ; for they never exercised any inhumanity on those they had vanquished ; but it must be confessed, that Tamerlan sometimes did. It will be necessary however in this place, to obviate an objection that has been made to his conduct, and which has arisen principally, from those who have treated of the affairs of this prince, not having made proper allowances for his circumstances and situation, and from their imputing his actions to wrong motives. I admit, that he was sometimes inhuman, although he was not so from genius or inclination, but from policy only. In consequence of the vast design he had formed, of making himself master of all Asia, or, to speak more properly, of all the world, he conceived it necessary to adopt alternately, the two extremes of gentleness and severity ; gentleness, with those who submitted upon the approach of his standards ; and severity, with those who obstinately held out to the last extremity. He was violently passionate, which is a vice, that although it is different from that of cruelty, has much the appearance of it, and is frequently mistaken for it ;

for to determine whether a man is cruel, we should observe how he acts in cold blood; as the most merciful and mild disposed person, in the impetuous sallies of his anger, may be betrayed into executing a stroke of violence. Many of the bloody orders of Tamerlan, were given, not while he held the pen, but the sword in his hand; either in the hour of battle; or immediately after it; and it was before the warlike raging heat of his blood had time to cool, that he determined upon acts of vengeance; nor was it in the cabinet, but the field, that he manifested these dispositions of barbarity. It is certain on the other hand, that he never was known, neither with those who submitted themselves voluntarily to him, nor with any of his own subjects, to have practised an action, that might be termed a cruel one. Tamerlan then, was not what he has commonly been described to have been, a fierce savage brute, who, like a Nero, or a Caligula, from sallies of inhumanity and caprice, and his fondness for doing acts of barbarity, would shed human blood.

LXIV. Nor was his ambition so outrageous and unbridled, as to excite him to trample with contempt, on the opinion of the world. He was desirous of usurping absolute authority, but without incurring the stigma of being termed an usurper. To accomplish

plish this, he, like other artful tyrants, disguised this vicious disposition, with the masque of virtue. He declared, that the world was over-run with corruption, and that justice and good faith were banished from among mankind, and that we saw nothing but perfidy and wickedness, practised by princes with princes, by princes with their subjects, and by the subjects themselves with one another. Therefore, as he had been vested with a special commission from the Almighty for the reformation of mankind, he gave out, that Divine Providence had chosen him as the instrument, to chastise evil-doers, and to restore all things to their proper state of order and decorum; but he was neither so vain nor so foolish, as to think the world would give him credit for being vested with such a commission, upon the bare testimony of his own word; and therefore, he endeavoured to gain credit for being so impowered, by putting on the appearances of a devout man, and by practising the actions of a just one. He esteemed men of letters, and took delight in their conversation; and always shewed a profound respect for his false prophet Mahomet. He treated with special attention, the Doctors of that mistaken sect, and with singular reverence, all those who had acquired the reputation of being eminently virtuous.

LXIV. But above all, he was a strict observer of justice towards his subjects; and punished thefts and roguery, without remission, or distinction of persons. He caused governors of provinces to be hanged like common thieves, if they plundered, or exercised any acts of tyranny on his subjects. Thus through all his dominions, people's persons and properties were so secure and well protected, and their confidence in the safety of both, was so thoroughly established, that no man seemed to take the least thought, or to be the least anxious about preserving either of them, for Tamerlan was the general guardian of all things; and so free were his territories from thefts, robberies, or outrages, that Cheref Eddin Ali declares, an unarmed man might travel any route, and from one end to the other of his dominions, with a bowl of silver on his head filled with gold, and not meet with the least molestation.

LXVI. It is true, that his severity in some instances, was carried to the extreme, as for example, when he ordered a soldier to be put to death for taking from a poor peasant, a little milk and cheese. But the proportion of bad contained in such actions, should be estimated, by taking into consideration the whole combination of

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circumstances accompanying them; for there are without doubt, various cases, where what seems excessive rigour, may be dictated by prudence. The sallies of military licentiousness, require many times, to be restrained by such violent strictures; for when either among troops, or the people in general, outrages are very frequent, it may become necessary, in order to suppress them, to exercise greater rigour, than by the true spirit of justice, is permitted to be exercised upon ordinary and common occasions.

LXVII. I cannot help in this place making a remark, which is very worthy of being attended to, and as I don't remember it has been made by any other person, I mention it here, which is, that under governments who are very vigilant in detecting rogues, and very rigorous in punishing them, there are fewer executions, than where the government is more relaxed; so that what at first sight may appear extreme rigour, when all things are considered, is in truth and reality, lenity. It is not difficult to decypher this seeming paradox. Whenever it is universally known in a state, that there is great vigilance practised in detecting roguery, and that after people are convicted of crimes, there is no hope of pardon for them, the instances of outrages become very rare,

rare, and consequently, if capital punishments don't become totally unnecessary, they are very unfrequent. The terror impressed by the first executions, is a curb, on vile and perverse geni-uses; and by a king's hanging fifty or an hundred without remission, in the first year of his reign, he may find it necessary for the rest of his life to execute but very few; on the other hand, when the pardons are very frequent, and there is but little pains taken, to apprehend and bring rogues to justice, notwithstanding that there are many offences concealed, and many pardoned, the number of executions will be much greater in the course of a reign of moderate length, where this policy is adopted, than they would in that of a prince, who was vigilant to detect, and inexorable to punish, when he first ascends the throne. Let then these pernicious, and mistaken feelings of lenity, be banished from every state, as what is generally stiled rigour, is both salutary and beneficial to a community, and to all the individuals who are members of it.

LXVIII. I must add to this, that the proportioning punishments to crimes, should not be adjusted by the same rules in all places indifferently. In the ratio, that some nations are more

fierce and stubborn than others, the degree of punishment, should be increased in those nations; for what would be sufficient to restrain a mild and timid people, would be useless to curb a ferocious and hardened one. Tamerlan, who knew the genius and disposition of those who were under his dominion, knew also, how to proportion his punishments, to suit the nature and tempers of his various subjects, and knew likewise, that what would not be more than precisely necessary in one region, would be excessive in another.

LXIX. There is a particular instance, which demonstrates that he had great judgment in proportioning punishments, and that he never proceeded to excessive severities, without sufficient cause. An officer, who had served with reputation in former wars, was found tardy in a particular action. We might be apt to conclude from the martial temper of Tamerlan, that he would have ordered the man to be immediately beheaded; but he acted quite differently, and was satisfied with inflicting on him a much milder punishment, and one that was of such a nature, as did not affect the blood of the delinquent in the execution of it, except it was, by making it rise in his face from the
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shame and disgrace of the chastisement. He caused him to be affectedly ornamented and dressed out in womens cloaths, and in this habit, exposed him to the derision of the whole army. This in a European prince, would have been celebrated as a humourous, and a lenient punishment.

LXX. On the other hand, in his ordinary deportment as a man, he was mild, affable, and entertaining. What passed between him and the poet Ahmedi Kermani, shews evidently, that in conversation with his subjects, he abated his dignity even more, than it is common for the most pacific princes to do. The same poet tells us the story, in the history of Tamerlan, which he wrote in verse, and it was from thence Mons. Herbelot says it was taken.

LXXI. The story runs thus ; the king, when he was one day bathing, attended by many of the nobles of his court, and also by the poet Ahmedi Kermani, with whose wit and humour he always used to be much pleased, proposed to him, that he should entertain the company with some pleasant relation. To which Ahmedi replied, that he begged his majesty would name

the subject. Be it so, answered Tamerlan : I would have you then suppose, that we are all here in a fair to be sold, and that you are to have the disposal of us, and are to set a value upon each individual. Upon this, Ahmedi began to scrutinize all the noblemen who were present, and to determine with great pleasantry, what he should ask a head for them : he rated one at one price, and another at another ; and for his estimates of them, assigned some humourous reason. Tamerlan, observing that he had set a value upon every body but him, reminded him, that he also was for sale. Ahmedi, without the least embarrassment, replied, Why truly, Sir, I think I may venture to estimate you at about thirty aspres, which is an eastern coin of very small value. How ! says Tamerlan, you surely have underrated me ; for the napkin round my waist is worth as much as that ; why, answered Ahmedi, that's the principal thing I regarded in making the estimate ; for I should not have valued your person at above two oblos. Tamerlan, so far from being offended at this, was pleased with the joke, and rewarded the poet with a handsome present. I ask now, is this anecdote of his life, descriptive of a fierce tyrant, or a most affable prince ? These domestic trifles, better

ter display the natural tempers of princes, than great military, or political operations, because the last, are almost constantly attended with ostentation mixed with reserve, and the others, are generally the effects of the pure simple workings of nature unconstrained.

LXXII. Nor was he deficient in point of modesty, for he generally had an eye to preserving the appearance of it in his deportment; and if this was not the effect of virtue, it at least shewed his discretion; and may as fairly be urged as an argument, to disprove the allegation of his being a vain boaster, as if his behaviour had proceeded from the purest motives. Being once in conversation with a Mahometan Doctor, whom he had taken a prisoner, he said to him, Doctor, you see me here just what I am; which is properly no more than a miserable little man, or rather a half man; and notwithstanding I have conquered so many provinces and cities, in Iraca, in the Indies, and in Turquestan; I owe all my successes, to *the divine Grace and Favour*; nor has the spilling the blood of so many Mussulmen been my fault; for I swear and protest to you in the presence of God, that I have never undertaken any war, with a deliberate purpose of oppressing any one; but

it has been my enemies, who have provoked the chastisement of my arms, and have brought on themselves their own ruin.

LXXIII. He was always consistent and uniform in his declarations of the motives for his conduct, and constantly insisted, that he never employed his troops in any enterprize, from mere views of ambition, but from necessity, and upon great provocation; and in truth, he was not so unjust as he has commonly been represented to have been. Houssein, King of Transoxana, whose dominions were the first he conquered, might more properly be called the invader of Tamerlan, than Tamerlan could be deemed the invader of him; for Houssein, to the injustice of entering the other's territories hostilely, and without provocation, added ingratitude also, Tamerlan having in some of his military enterprizes, done him great service. The other princes, over whom he triumphed, were for the greatest part usurpers, and people who had acquired what they held, by more iniquitous means, than Tamerlan used to distress them; for they usurped what they seized from the legitimate owners, but he only took what he despoiled them of, from a set of thieves. Neither did he move against Bajazet unprovoked, for he, before experiencing the least hostility from Tamerlan, exercised some hostile acts,

acts, both upon Tamerlan's subjects, and upon several princes who were in alliance with him; to which we may add, that various other princes whom Bajazet had despoiled, implored the assistance of Tamerlan against his oppressions, as against the common enemy of mankind. In consequence of all this, Tamerlan sent an ambassador to him, to remonstrate against the injustice of his conduct, and to try by fair means, to bring him to reason, but he treated his ambassador with scorn, and dismissed him contemptuously.

LXXIV. But the most material thing in Tamerlan's favour is, that he left those princes who submitted to him voluntarily in the quiet possession of their dominions. This benefit, was obtained by the King of Kurt, by the Sovereigns of Mazanderan, Schirvan, and many others; but in order to obtain this, they found it necessary to submit to Tamerlan, before his triumphant troops invested their walls.

LXXV. Neither is there the least foundation, for the tales of the insolencies he exercised on the princes who became his prisoners. He not only granted Hussein his life, but permitted him to retire and live quiet wherever he liked best ;

best ; but the imprudent distrust of this unhappy man, cost him his life ; for doubting of his safety, he fled from his habitation, and hid himself in a cave, where a peasant finding him concealed, put him to death. We are assured, that Tamerlan shed tears, upon hearing of his catastrophe ; but whether those tears were affected or sincere, will ever continue problematical, as it does, of which species those were, that Cæsar shed, upon hearing of the death of Pompey. But, admitting that this grief was feigned, it proves at least, that Tamerlan strove to preserve the appearance of his being a clement and compassionate man, which is incompatible with the vulgar accounts of his brutal and undisguised ferocity.

LXXVI. But after all, the most clamorous charge against Tamerlan remains still to be replied to, and which we find greatly aggravated in all the histories that have been written in Europe, where his conduct has been canvassed, and relates to the cruel imprisonment he inflicted on Bajazet. That unfortunate monarch, to whom, before he was defeated by Tamerlan, they, on account of the rapidity of his conquests, gave the surname of Gilderin, which signifies ray, or flash ; after having for a long time been the terror of Europe and Asia, and after innumerable conquests gained over both the Christian
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and Mahometan princes whose territories were in the neighbourhood of his dominions, was at length, miserably defeated by Tamerlan, and made a prisoner in a great battle, where they counted the number of combatants on each side, by hundreds of thousands. Of this fact there is not the least doubt ; the point in dispute, being only, what was the sequel of the tragedy. All the European authors agree unanimously, that Tamerlan, as soon as he had the Ottoman monarch in his power, caused him to be put into an iron cage, which cage, at his meal-times, he used to order to be placed at the bottom of his table, from whence he fed him with bones and scraps that he threw to him, in the same manner that you would feed a dog ; and that he never had him taken out of the cage, but to serve him as a block to tread on whenever he mounted his horse ; and for this purpose, he caused him to be laid prostrate on the ground, and was used to set his foot on his shoulders. They tell us further, that Bajazet lived some time in this miserable state of humiliation ; but that at length, he in a fit of rage and despair, dashed his brains out against the bars of the cage. Some authors add to this, another very heavy charge against Tamerlan, although they don't quote the antient authors

authors from whom they took it, nor have I seen any author who mentions it. The accusation is this, that Tamerlan caused the wife of Bajazet to wait upon him naked, when he was sitting at table, Bajazet himself being present at the spectacle ; and that the furious rage excited in him by the sight of such an object, the beholding of which, was worse to him than death itself, caused him to dispatch himself.

LXXVII. But with all this, the wonderful relation we have been just mentioning is fabulous, and deserving to be comprehended in the catalogue of injurious impostures, which should be blotted out from the history of Tamerlan ; for it is not credible, that he would have treated so unworthily, so great a monarch as Bajazet ; and notwithstanding there has been no tale circulated in a greater number of volumes, than the abasement and disgraceful death of Bajazet ; for, besides the numerous histories in which we read accounts of them, there is scarce a book of ethic, or moral reflections, in which, to display the inconstancy of human affairs, and the great reverses of fortune, the instance of Bajazet, precipitated from the proudest throne in the world, to the bottom of the table, and the feet of the horse of Tamerlan, is not brought as an example ; I say, notwithstanding

standing all this, the story ought to be rejected as fabulous. The testimony of Monsieur Herbelot, should have great weight in this question, who says, that in none of the Oriental authors, even including those who were enemies to Tamerlan, is to be found the story of the iron cage, save and excepting in an Ottoman chronicle of very modern date, that has been translated by Leunclavius, and which takes notice of it. This evidence, should be esteemed of little weight; because, besides it's standing single, and being but of small antiquity, the person who gives it, was an enemy to Tamerlan; and it is not improbable, but the Turk who wrote that chronicle, collected his materials from European authors. The authors of credit and reputation whom Monsieur Herbelot examined, relate the thing in a quite different manner, for they rather assure us, that Tamerlan's treatment of the Ottoman Emperor, was of the most generous kind; that he invited him to his table, and caused a magnificent and royal tent to be erected for his habitation; that he most obligingly endeavoured to divert and amuse him, in various ways; and made several feasts, and contrived divers pastimes to entertain him: that in the conversations he had with him under his misfortunes, he discoursed much of the inconsistency of fortune, and the vicissitude of human affairs; and they say finally, that Bajazet died a
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natural death, and differ only, in their accounts of the distemper that carried him off; some asserting that it was a quinsy, and others that it was an apoplexy. They say further, that Tamerlan was much concerned for his death; and protested solemnly when they informed him of it, that it was his intention to restore him to the throne of his ancestors, after first reinstating in their dominions, the princes whose kingdoms he had taken from them.

LXXVIII. The benignity of Tamerlan towards Bajazet, was so much the more commendable, by so much the more the rigour the latter exercised with others, would have justified his treating him with greater severity; for Bajazet behaved to those he had conquered, with the utmost haughtiness and cruelty; and affected to despise all the other sovereigns upon earth. What excess of severity could have been imputed to Tamerlan, if after having in lawful war, taken such a man a prisoner, he had chastised rigorously, his usurpations, insolencies, and cruelties, among which, might be enumerated his ordering in cold blood, six hundred French cavaliers, whom he had taken prisoners of war, to be beheaded in his presence? What treatment could be better proportioned to the proud haughtiness of a man, who pretended to make slaves of
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all the world, than loading him with chains, and imprisoning him in an iron cage; and in order to humble his pride, using him like the most vile slave, and converting his superb shoulders to a block, for the conqueror to set his foot on when he mounted his horse? I say all this might be justified, upon the principle, of making him an example to deter others from the like practices. And besides what we have enumerated, the injuries he had done, and the provocations he had given to Tamerlan himself, would have justified his behaving to him with great severity; for example, his wantonly invading the possessions of his subjects, and the territories of his allies; his speaking of him in reproachful and ignominious terms, for instance, calling him thief, and a mean vile fellow, all which had been told to Tamerlan; and to sum up the whole, his treating with derision and contempt, a reasonable expostulatory letter, which Tamerlan had written to him on his behaviour. When all this is considered, we shall not find it wonderful, that Tamerlan, a conqueror, who was not instructed in, nor influenced by the mild precepts of the gospel, exercised on such a captive as Bajazet, the utmost rigour; and it being certain, that his treatment of him was as mild as we have represented it to have been, we ought rather to be surprized at his using him so gently, and to censure his
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clemency towards a man, whom the principles of justice, seem to dictate should have been punished with rigour.

LXXIX. Although it appears rather superfluous to add any thing more in favour of Tamerlan, we will just take notice of a circumstance respecting his usage of Bajazet, which the authors who relate it, mention with great confidence; and that is, that Bajazet, after he had fallen into his hands, afforded him a special provocation for treating him as he did. They say, that Tamerlan asked him, how he would have treated him if he had been the conqueror? To which Bajazet with an unbridled ferocity, and in a disgustful tone of voice answered, that he would have loaded him with chains, and have shut him into an iron cage, and would also have made him serve as a block to set his foot on when he mounted his horse. Upon this gross and barbarous answer, Tamerlan ordered, that he should be treated in the same manner himself; and I believe you will hardly find a prince of such tender feelings, that upon receiving so irrational a provocation, would not have taken the same kind of satisfaction.

LXXX. With regard to what is said of the gross manner in which he used the wife of Bajazet, although many authors affirm the fact, I make no doubt but the story is fabulous; for

besides the silence of all the Oriental authors upon this head, Chalecondylas, who is the most ancient of the European ones who treat of the affairs of Tamerlan, as he wanted but little of being contemporary with that prince, takes no notice of it, which is a strong presumptive argument that the tale is fabulous; and indeed it is not only a presumptive, but in some degree a positive one, of its being so. It is true, that he speaks of Tamerlan's treating her with indignity; and mentions the affront he put upon her, which was making her serve him with the cup at table in the presence of Bajazet: *Jussa est in conspectu mariti sui vinum infundere*. Would this Greek author have concealed the gross circumstance of his making her do it naked, which would have infinitely aggravated the injury, if the thing had been true? I might safely venture to answer, that he certainly would not. I therefore conclude, that the story of the nakedness, was the invention of some author, who was greatly posterior to Chalcondylas; who, having read of Tamerlan's obliging the wife of Bajazet to serve him with the cup, in order to heighten the tragedy of that prince, and give a gloss to the relation, foisted it into his history. If Tamerlan really acted by the wife of Bajazet, as Chalcondylas has represented him to have done, I won't pretend to justify his behaviour; but admitting

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all he says to be true, if we attend to the many instances of provocation which Bajazet had given to Tamerlan, by his barbarity, haughtiness, and ferocity, Tamerlan's taking this method of humbling his pride, will not appear so highly reprehensible; and we might even add, that it was in some degree excusable.

LXXXI. From all that has been said, we may infer the opinion we ought to entertain of the character of Tamerlan; which is, that he was a prince, who, like all other conquerors that are without the light of the gospel, did much good, and much harm. He was an eminent warrior, a profound politician, and a zealous observer of justice to his own subjects; although he acted by strangers, sometimes justly, and at others unjustly; and also sometimes mercifully, and at others cruelly; but by his natural genius and disposition, he was more inclined to mercy than severity; and the enormous deluges of blood, which he caused to be shed upon some occasions, did not proceed from his ferocious and merciless disposition, but from starts of blind rage, and his thoughtless compliance with the maxims, which his ambition and his policy dictated to him, and which allowed of no intervals for the operations of humanity.

LXXXII. Upon the whole, I don't pretend that the apology I have made for this prince, cannot be replied to. It is sufficient for my purpose, if what I have said in his favour, has the greatest probability of its side; as its being the most probable, ought to be effectual to exonerate him from the public infamy that has been thrown upon him; for no man should be deprived of his honour, without first establishing the certainty of his guilt.

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A N S W E R

T O T H E

L E T T E R of a G E N T L E M A N

Who made an Objection to the historical Account
given by FEYJÖÖ of My Lord BACON.

DEAR SIR,

I. **Y**OUR reproving me for the Eulogiums
bestowed on you in my letter, con-
vinces me thoroughly that they were just and
merited; as modesty and an aversion to being
praised, are qualities that always accompany ele-
vated worth. I shall therefore not dwell longer
on this head, but proceed in the best manner I
am able, to give you the satisfaction you desire,
with respect to what I said in a former letter,
that my Lord Bacon was the first who told the
philosophers, that pursuing systems, was going on
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in a mistaken road to search for truth; and who in his writings, pointed out to them the path they should pursue in order to arrive at this object; but as he perceived that Aristotle was the leader and master of the literary world, that is, that his philosophical system was almost universally received and adopted, he found it necessary, in order to induce them to follow his advice, to attempt to discredit the authority of Aristotle, which he in a great measure accomplished, and brought many eminent men to concur with him in opinion.

II. You deny that Bacon was the first who engaged in the undertaking of discrediting Aristotle, and attacking his systems; for that Bernardinus Telesius, a celebrated philosopher, and native of Cosenza, attempted it before him; and although Bacon made great advances in this matter, he only improved an undertaking begun by another man, and worked upon his plan.

III. My good Sir, in investigating this point, we shall find there are two distinct things to be considered, and that the consequences to be deduced from them, are by no means reciprocal or the same. One of them is, whether Bacon was the first who formed the project of discrediting all systems; and the other is, whether he was

the first who undertook to attack Aristotle. I affirm that he took the lead in attacking all systems in general; but not that he was the first who attacked the doctrines of Aristotle. Indeed I could not assert this last circumstance, without falling not only into a gross error, but into a manifest contradiction of myself; for in the fourth volume of the *Theatrico Critico*, I have said, that not only Bernardinus Telesius, preceded Bacon, in the attempt of combating Aristotle; but I also pointed out many others, who had preceded him in the same attempt; and instanced Gemistus, Plethon, Cardinal Bessarion, Franciscus Patricius, Theophrastus Paracelsus, together with Peter del Ramo.

IV. I also declared in the same place, after making mention of Paracelsus, that Bernardus Telesius (nearly at the same time with him) who was a native of the city of Cosenza in the kingdom of Naples, and a man of subtle ingenuity, declared himself averse to the physics of Aristotle; and endeavoured to establish the system of his own, upon the principles, which, with a little variation, were afterwards adopted by Campanela.

V. I there also, in express words, declared, that Bacon was posterior to Telesius in his attack upon the doctrines of Aristotle, as may be seen by the

the order in which I ranged Aristotle's impugners; for after mentioning the philosopher Cosentinus, and many others of them, I proceeded to speak of Bacon, which I did in the following words; *After these came that great and sublime genius Francis Bacon, earl of Verulam, &c.* and you will please to observe, that the words after these, as they stand in the context, clearly imply, that Bacon was not only posterior to Telesius, but to all the others; both with respect to the time in which he lived, and also in his attack upon Aristotle. By all this you may see clearly, that I can make no objection to your well-grounded assertion, that as Telesius was considerably anterior to Bacon, he could borrow no lights from Bacon's works.

VI. But did Bacon borrow any from Telesius to assist him in his endeavours of demonstrating, that all philosophical systems are erroneous; and in pointing out to the philosophers, the track they should pursue in order to arrive at truth? This is the point in which we differ, and this is the only point of view in which I insist that Bacon stands single, or at least, that this is an undertaking in which he never was preceded, either by Telesius, or any other. Telesius, it is true, attacked the doctrines of Aristotle before Bacon; but did he declare himself averse to all

systems, or systematic modes of philosophizing? Nothing like it, for he himself was a rigorous systematic philosopher, and a follower of the ancient doctrine of Parmenides, who constituted heat and cold as the first principles of all things.

VII. If further proof in this matter was necessary, Bacon's Treatise on the Philosophical Doctrines of Parmenides, Telesius, and Democritus, where he intentionally and expressly, attacks and reprobates all their philosophical tenets, seems decisive; for he there, so far from shewing himself a follower of Telesius, or a worker upon his plan, studiously and seriously applies himself, to taking to pieces and overturning the whole plan of Telesius; and in another part of his works, that is in his Treatise *de Auxiliis mentis, et accensione luminis naturalis*; he treats his system as a theatrical fable: *Quoniam etiam nudiustertius Bernardinus Telesius scenam conscendit, et novam fabulam egit, nec plausu celebrem, nec argumento elegantem.*

VIII. From these premises it must follow, that Bacon could borrow no lights from Telesius, to assist him in pointing out to the philosophers, the path they should pursue to arrive at truth; and this path which he pointed out to them, was that
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of experience, which never once occurred to Telesius. Or indeed, how can it be supposed that such a man as Telesius, should point out to others the road of experience, as the only one by which they could arrive at a knowledge of philosophical truths, when he was pre-occupied and pre-possessed, in favour of the system of Parmenides, which he recommended to every one, as the only mode, by which that knowledge could be attained? An author never directs his readers to follow any other road, than that which he pursues himself; nor does he lead them by any other, than that which he himself travels.

IX. I have not seen the Philosophical Works of Telesius, but I have in my possession all those of Campanella, who no one doubts was a faithful sectary of Telesius; but I can find nothing in them that is at all like Bacon; although it is by no means unlikely, that Bacon, when he was combating some particular propositions in Aristotle, might make use of some arguments that had before been urged by Telesius; but upon the whole, the plans and the objects of the two men, were very widely different. Telesius endeavoured to throw down the system of Aristotle, in order to build up that of Parmenides on the ruins of it. Bacon strove to demolish that of Aristotle, that of Parmenides, and the systems of all other philosophers

sophers whatever; and recommended to all those who employed themselves in philosophical speculations, to apply themselves solely to the study of experimental observations.

X. This is what has occurred to me on the subject of your objection, which I submit to your consideration and correction; and beg leave to return you my thanks for the honour you have done me in dedicating your little new book to me.

God keep you.

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On the Subject of the

W A N D E R I N G J E W.

In Answer to one written to FEYJÖÖ, asking his
Opinion of that Matter.

DEAR SIR,

I. **I**N return to your enquiries concerning the
story of the Wandering Jew, and the
question you ask me respecting it, which is, whe-
ther I have read an account of such a person in
any author deserving of credit, or who is esteemed
classical? I must answer, that I have read accounts
of such a man in various authors, some of whom
are reckoned classical, but their relations of him
vary in particular circumstances.

II. The first, to the best of my remembrance,
who made any mention of him in a regular his-
tory,

tory, was the celebrated English historian Matthew Paris; according to which author, there came to England in 1229, an Armenian bishop, who was recommended by the pope, to be shewn the relics of saints that were deposited in that kingdom; and the pope added in his recommendation of him, a request that he might have all the information he was desirous of respecting these matters, and every particular relating to them. As it was current among the vulgar at that time, that the Wandering Jew was then going about the Oriental Regions; some curious people asked the bishop, whose habitation and diocese was in that quarter, and who they on that account, thought must know whether those reports were true or not, many questions concerning them; and desired he would tell them, whether there really had been, or was then, such a person as the Wandering Jew in that country; and if he was living now, in what quarter he was travelling, what sort of man he was, and what account he gave of himself? To which the bishop answered, that the said Jew really now existed, and was at present strolling about Armenia. They put the same questions to several others, who came as attendants on, or companions to the bishop, who all gave the same answer; and one of them gave a particular account

count of him and his adventures, who was a person that could speak English, and express himself readily in Latin also.

III. This man told them, that the Wandering Jew, before his conversion, was named Cataphilus, and had been the porter or door-keeper of Pilate ; and that, being at his station as such, when they brought our Saviour from before the prætor, in order to crucify him, he, to make him move on faster, at his going out of the door, gave him a blow with his fist on the shoulders ; upon which our Redeemer turning his head, said to him, *The Son of Man is going, but you shall remain here till he returns.* The porter upon this immediately became a convert to Christianity, and was baptized by Ananias, who gave him the name of Joseph. This expression of our Saviour's to him, was understood to imply a prediction, that this Jew should not die, till Christ's return to judge the quick and the dead ; which prophecy had been verified with respect to the Jew to that day, who was then more than twelve hundred and fifty years old, although at the end of every hundred years of his age, he had always experienced some threatenings of death, for at this period, he had been constantly visited with a severe disease, which so far debilitated him, that it might be
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said to have brought him to death's door; but upon his recovery, his youth seemed to have been renewed, for he did not appear a man of more than thirty years old, which was the age of Christ, at the time of his crucifixion.

IV. This person added, that the Jew Joseph was very well known to the bishop, and had lived in his house but a little before he set out on his journey to England.

V. The said historian, upon the authority we have been mentioning, tells us further, that the Jew answered minutely, and in a grave, and composed manner, to all questions that were asked him concerning antient things, and gave a particular account of the opening of the graves, and the rising of the dead, when our Saviour gave up the ghost, and also of the lives and actions of the apostles; that he always seemed greatly afraid that the day of judgment was near at hand, because that would be the period of his life; and that he never failed to be seized with great horror, when he was reminded of the sacrilegious disrespect he had been guilty of to our Saviour; but he always expressed hopes of being

ing pardoned, on account of his great ignorance of the sin he committed.

VI. Jacob Bafnage, a Protestant author, in his history of the Jews, tells us of three wandering Jews. The first and most antient of whom, was named *Samer*, and was condemned to wander, as a punishment, for his having cast the first golden calf in the days of Moses. The other, was the Cataphilus we have been speaking of, who was the porter to Pilate; and the third was named *Asuerus*, and was a shoemaker at Jerusalem. He says this last appeared in 1547 at Hamburgh, and the account he gave of himself, was with only the variation of here and there a circumstance, the same, that the Armenians gave of the person, whom they said they knew in their own country. This man declared, that before his conversion, he was called *Asuerus*, was a shoemaker by trade, and kept a shoemaker's shop near the gate of Jerusalem, at which our Saviour went out in his way to Mount Calvari; who when he approached the gate, finding himself much fatigued, was desirous of resting himself a little while in his shop; but that he gave him a shove, and would not suffer him to enter the door, and that

that then Christ said to him ; *I shall soon be at rest, but you shall wander about without ceasing till my return.* He said, the prophecy began to take effect from that instant, and had continued in force till then ; for that he had constantly, ever since that æra, been wandering without being able to settle himself in any province whatever. He was a man of large stature, and had the appearance of one of about fifty years of age ; he was also apt to fetch frequent deep sighs, which the by-standers imputed to the sadness that was caused in him by the remembrance of his crime.

VII. Our great expositor Augustin Calmet, in his *Dictionario Biblico*, testifies to have had in his possession, a letter written at London by Lady Mazarine (who I suppose was she they called the Dutchess Hortensia Mancini, and who was as famous for her labours, as her beauty) to the Dutchess of Bullon, in which she relates, that at the time she wrote the letter, there arrived a stranger in England, who gave the same sort of account of himself, as that the Jew we mentioned before did. He asserted, says Lady Hortensia, that he knew all the apostles, and gave a particular

cular description of their stature, their features, and the cloaths they wore ; he said, he had gone over all the regions of the earth, and that he should not cease to wander till the end of the world. He boasted that he could heal the diseased with his touch, and understood many languages ; and related with such exactness the events of all ages, that every one listened to him with admiration. A gentleman who was eminently learned addressed him in Arabic ; and he answered him off hand in the same language ; nor could you mention to him the name of any person who had been famous in former ages, that he did not affirm to have known. He said he was at Rome, when it was set fire to by Nero, and that he had conversed with Mahomet, and knew his father ; that he had seen Saladine, Tamerlan, Bajazet, Soliman the great, &c. and she added in her letter, that simple people attributed many wonderful performances to him, but that the wise and prudent looked upon him as an impostor.

VIII. The author of the Turkish Spy, whoever he might have been, which is a fact that I don't think has yet been ascertained, makes mention in many of his letters, of the wandering Jew.

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Epist.

Epist. 39. of his second volume addressed to Ibrahim, and which was supposed to have been written about the year 1643, is all taken up with particulars and circumstances relating to the Wandering Jew, who he says he saw and conversed with at Paris, and asked him many questions respecting the things of antiquity. The Spy says, he told him his name was Michob Ader, and that he had been door-keeper to the Divan at Jerusalem, together with all the circumstances that Calmet says were related of him by the Dutcheſs of Mazarine; to which was added, that he had travelled through a variety of countries, had read much, and understood many languages. But notwithstanding all this, the Spy was of opinion, that he was either a madman, or an impostor.

IX. The same author in his fifth volume, epist. 50. addressed to his friend Nathan Ben Saddi, a Jew, and which was written about the year 1666; I say the same author in this letter, relates to Ben Saddin, many particulars and circumstances respecting the Wandering Jew, whom he tells him he had seen and conversed with at Paris; and acquaints him with a variety of things, that the said Jew had told him relating to the Jews in the northern parts of Asia, which he believed to be the relicks of the twelve dispersed tribes.

X. This

X. This author in his sixth volume, epist. 9. written in the year 1672, to Gulielmus, tells him, towards the latter part of it, that they talked in all places of a wandering Jew, who at that time was said to be at Astracan, and there preaching, that Christianity would be at an end in 1700. And in his seventh epistle addressed to Codabafrad Kheick, a Mahometan, written in the same year of 1672, he gives him an account, of all the Wandering Jew preached and prophesied at Astracan. The Spy says, that a relation of his, named Foufi, was living there at the same time, who had been a great traveller, and was a merchant; and adds, that he had received a letter from him but a little while before, which gave him the account of all these particulars respecting the wandering Jew.

XI. He prophesied, says the Spy, that in the year 1700 of the Hegira of the Christians, the Turks would over-run all the continent of Europe, and every part occupied by the Christians on the main land; that the Christians would fly to England as an asylum, and that there a great person would spring up, that would become their

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chief

chief and leader, and that he would conquer Jerusalem. The Jews would then open their eyes, and acknowledge Jesus Christ for the true Messiah; but the Spy adds, that he only relates these things, and does not believe them.

XII. Notwithstanding the foregoing, he in his seventeenth epistle of the same volume, written in 1674, to the Turk Ali Bashaw, gives him to understand towards the conclusion of the said letter, that he believes the prophecy of the Wandering Jew, which perhaps he did to flatter the Mahometans, because the Jew says that they will overrun all Europe in the year 1700.

XIII. Finally, Father Louis Babenstuber, a German Benedictin, in a volume which he divided into three books, which was printed at Augsburgh in the year 1724, intitled *Prolusiones Academicæ*, where he institutes and treats of fifty-one questions, which he terms *Quodlibeticas curiosas*; and in the beginning of his 16th proposition of his third book, he proposes the question, whether, except Elias and Henoch, there ever was an older man in the world than Methusalem? and there after treating of Elias and Henoch, he speaks of the Wandering Jew; and after having related

related of him nearly the same that Jacob Bafnage did ; to Bafnage's account of him, he adds, that he was examined at Hamburgh, by Paulus Elizius, a Theologian, and then proceeds to say, *Vifus est autem hic Judæus ab innumeris mortalibus in multis Europæ partibus, nempe anno Christi 1547. Hamburgi. anno 1575. Matrîci in Hispania, anno 1599. Viennæ in Austria, anno 1610. Lubecæ, anno 1634. in Moscovia, alia plura loca sciens præterea.*

XIV. These are all the informations we have of the Wandering Jew ; by which you may see that this extraordinary person appeared in the year 1229 in England. In that of 1547 at Hamburgh. In that of 1575 at Madrid. In that of 1599 at Vienna. In that of 1610 at Lubec. In that of 1634 in Muscovy. In that of 1643 at Paris. In that of 1672 at Astracan ; and a few years after at London ; which was his second appearance in England. I say a few years afterwards, without pretending to determine in what year it was ; because Calmer has omitted to give us the date of the Dutchess Hortensia's letter. But this Lady, as appears from her life written by Monsieur St. Euvremont, and which is to be

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found in the fourth volume of his works, came to England in 1675, and died there in 1699, from whence it is plain, the second appearance of the Wandering Jew in that kingdom, must have been some time between those two æras.

XV. But can we give any credit to these accounts? I think none at all; and am inclined to disbelieve them; not so much because there is a great variation in the writers who speak of this person, in their relations of some circumstances concerning him, for this is not unfrequent in histories of established reputation, but because the most antient information we have of him, commences in the year 1229, which considering the antiquity of the fact, is without doubt a very recent date. How is it credible, that an event of such superlative magnitude, so extraordinary, and so singular in its kind, and so well calculated to enforce the truth of the Christian religion, and to defend it against the attacks of the Gentiles, should never have been known to, and never made mention of, by the fathers of the primitive ages? Even abstracted from its being a circumstance of such weight and importance in the case we have just mentioned, it would have reflected a very singular and brilliant lustre, on the

the glorious passion of our Saviour, and was on that account not only a worthy subject for the pens of the fathers to illustrate, but for those of the evangelists also.

XVI. But upon a supposition that this was a fable, it might be asked, what could have given rise to, or have been the origin of it? To this I should answer, that I never give myself much trouble about enquiring into the origin of fables, for that although they may have had their foundation in some true event, which fiction, or the want of rightly understanding, may have contributed so to disfigure, that no likeness of the real and true event may ever have been discernable in them; still fables have most commonly no other beginning, than in the invention of the deceiver who takes it into his head to fabricate them; and this is most frequent, when such an inventor has an interest in their passing for truth; which without doubt was the case, with respect to the instance we have been treating of. What pleasanter life, could an idle man of talents, who was cautious, and well versed in history, and who could speak eight or nine languages, lead, than that of wandering about the world, and pretend-

ing to be the Jew we have been speaking of? He might travel through all the kingdoms of Christendom, be well entertained, and might have a free access even to the thrones of princes, and be furnished at freecost, not only with every thing that was necessary for him, but even with the superfluities of life, by persons of all ranks and conditions, who might be induced to do all this, either from motives of curiosity, or piety. What greater stimulus than this was necessary, to excite the first man who practised this cheat, to feign such a story? and what other incentives did it require, to cause other vagrants, who were disposed to follow the same trade, to adopt the same pretence?

XVII. But if you are desirous of being informed of any thing more respecting this matter, than what may be deduced from the common origin of an infinite number of fables; I mean, if you are desirous of knowing any particular principle, from which it is probable this story of the Wandering Jew was derived; I will inform you, that it is not unlikely, it might have originated from a remote true fact, and from a modern fable, which was a disfiguration of that fact.

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The true fact, agreeable to scripture, tradition, and the authority of the holy fathers, is the preservation of the prophet Elias upon earth till the end of the world. Upon this true foundation, the Mahometans erected a fable, which Herbelot gives us a relation of, in his *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, page 932. See the word *Zerib*. and for which relation, he quotes the author of a book intituled *Nighiaristan*; under which title, there are many Persian books; and Herbelot informs us, that *Nighiaristan* in the Persian language, signifies a walk where people assemble to amuse themselves, or a place of public entertainment and diversion; but he does not tell us the particular book with this title, from whence he extracted the story, which is as follows.

XVIII. In the sixth year of the Hegira, just after the Arabs had taken the city of Holvan or Hulvan in Syria, three hundred cavaliers, who were returning together from that expedition, a little before night, encamped between two mountains. Their Chief, who was named Fadhilah, ordered, that they should conformable to the Mahometan rites, repeat the evening prayer, which begins with God is great; but they had

no sooner pronounced these words with an audible voice, than they heard them repeated again from a quarter where no body appeared, nor could they devise how, or by whom they were repeated, and thought at first that the repetition was made by an echo ; but upon finding that not only the words at the beginning of the prayer, but all the other sentences also, were repeated clearly and distinctly, they began to suspect, that this must be done by some person whom they could not perceive. Upon which, Fadhilah turning himself to the place from whence the repetition came, said in a loud voice, *You who repeat our words, if you are of the order of the angels, God be with you ; but if you are one of the other sort of spirits, I conjure you to depart ; but if you are a man like myself, come forth and let me see you, that I may have the satisfaction of surveying your person, and of conversing with you.* When he had made an end of speaking these words, an old bald-headed man with a staff in his hand, who had much the air of a Dervis, came forth, and stood before him, and upon being asked his name by Fadhilah, said his name was Zerib. Bar. Elia. and that he had taken up his abode in that quarter by the order of Jesus Christ, who had appointed

pointed him to remain upon earth till the time of his second coming. Fadhilah then asked him, when that second coming would be? to which he replied, when men and women should mix together without shame or distinction, as if they were of one sex; when the abundance of provisions should not lower their price; when the poor, on account of the total extinction of charity, should find no body to administer to their distress; when the holy scriptures should be scoffed at and made a joke of, and the mysteries contained in them, be derided in ridiculous couplets; and when the temples dedicated to the true God, should be occupied by idols; then we might conclude, the final day of judgment was near at hand; and having said this, he disappeared.

XIX. There is involved in this story, a manifest inversion of that part of the sacred text, which speaks of the snatching away of Elias, in consequence of which, and its being corroborated by other parts of the holy scripture, many of both Christians and Jews think alike, with respect to the continuance of that prophet upon earth, until the end of the world. Elias was destined to this near nine hundred years before the coming of Christ; and this Mahometan account attributes this destination of him to have been made by our Saviour;

Saviour; which is a shocking anachronism. But we should not be surprized at this gross ignorance of the Mahometans; who, together with their false prophet, in their expositions of the scripture, confound times and persons, in the most extravagant manner that can be conceived. In the third sura or chapter of the alcoran, Mahomet indentifies Mary the sister of Moses, and Mary the mother of Christ, as one and the same person; the first of whom was much more anterior to the last, than Elias was to Christ; and agreeable to the seventeenth sura or chapter, according to the exposition given of it by their famous commentator Gelaledin, the invasion of Palestine by the army in which Goliath was, was a punishment, for the Israelites having put to death Zacharias the father of John the Baptist; and the invasion of it by Nebuchadnezzar, was for their having killed the Baptist himself.

XX. At sight of these, and other monstrous inversions of both the old and new testament, which are very frequent in the alcoran, and the writings of the Mahometan commentators, I have been inclined to think, that it is probable some Mahometans, may have confounded John the Baptist with John the Evangelist, and may have made two distinct sayings of Christ, applicable to one
and

and the same person, although one of them alludes to the Baptist, and the other to the Evangelist. Christ said of the Baptist (Matt. cap. ii.) *Ipse est Elias, qui venturus est* ; and of the Evangelist (John cap. xxi.) *Sic eum volo manere, donec veniam*. Which words, the other disciples understood to amount to a decree of Christ's, that he should continue alive to the final day of judgment. From this confounding different persons in one and the same, might originate among the blind Mahometans, the fiction or belief, that Elias by the appointment of Christ, was to remain alive upon earth till the final day of judgment.

XXI. The persuasion then, that Elias was the person of whom our Saviour pronounced, *Sic eum volo manere, donec veniam*, might possibly give rise to the Mahometan Nighiaristan story; which upon being published, might put it into the head of some artful fellow, to assume the character of a Wandering Jew, and under that disguise, to apply this prediction delivered by Christ to himself.

XXII. But you will please to remember, that I observed before, there was no occasion to rummage disfigured histories to seek for the origin

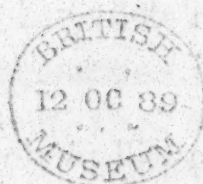
366 A LETTER ON THE SUBJECT, &c.
of numberless fables, as the imagination of man,
is prodigiously fertile in bringing forth these pro-
ductions, and is capable of creating the whole of
a lie, without the auxiliary assistance of an atom
of truth.

G O D keep you.

E R R A T A.

- Page 4, line 10, *for* Cato, *read* Cæno.
Page 72, line 9, *for* was, *read* were.
Page 83, line 3, *for* Clildren, *read* Children.
Page 181, line 7, *for* those, *read* the conversations.
Page 218, line 10, *for* to print, *read* to point out.
Page 226, line 1, *for* compared to them, *read* compared
to the moderns.
Page 264, line 22, *for* misfortunes, *read* sensitive feelings.

F I N I S.



IF the Reader shall find any mistakes or inaccuracies, which are not pointed out in the foregoing Errata, the Translator will be much obliged to him for communicating them to the persons who sell this book ; as the Critical Reviewers from such premises, without assigning any other reason for their opinion, have taken occasion to be very severe, and the Translator thinks very unfairly so, on the merit of the translation of the six Essays, made from the same author, and by the same hand these are, which were published about six months ago ; and an editor of a monthly publication, intituled, The Town and Country Magazine, who is pretty well known to be the echo of the Critical Review in these matters, has, after their example, thought fit, in a very laconic dogmatical way, to pronounce that it is a very indifferant translation from a very excellent work. But notwithstanding the arbitrary manner in which these people have taken upon them to pronounce this damning sentence, the translator has been told, they

understand very little, if any thing at all, of the language from whence the translation was made.

N.B. The above requisition having been annexed to this volume when it was published singly, immediately after six of the Essays in the foregoing volumes which were published by themselves had made their appearance; and which were the object of the above criticism; the Translator has thought it right to let it remain where it is; that the world may be apprized of the candour and impartiality of those Publications, the Critical Review, and Town and Country Magazine; and to judge how far they may be relied on as faithful reporters, and competent judges of the merit of works, on which, they take upon themselves to pronounce absolute and arbitrary sentences of condemnation.



END OF VOL. III.

